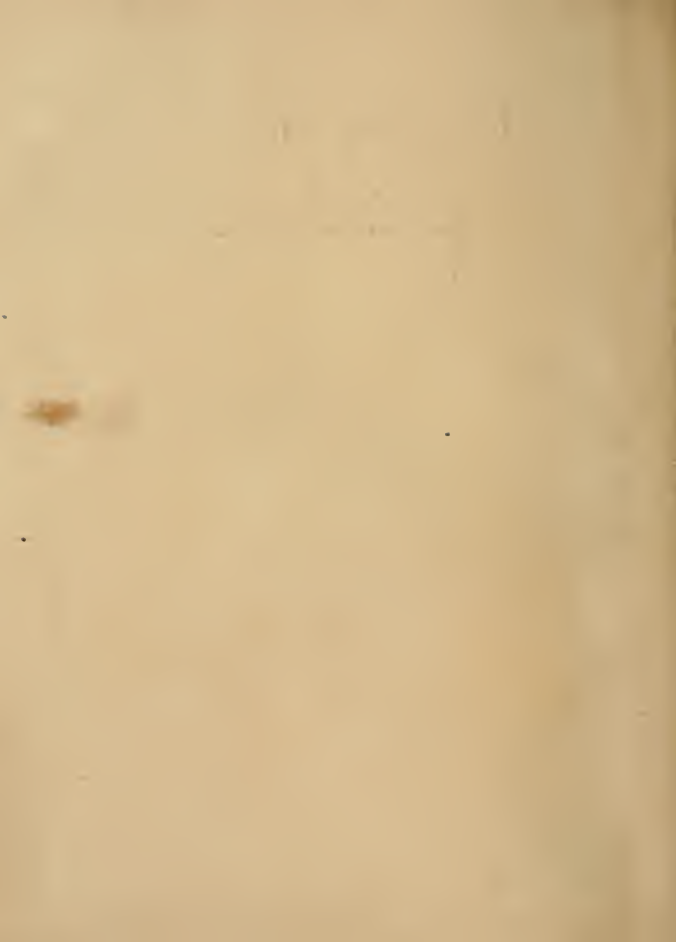


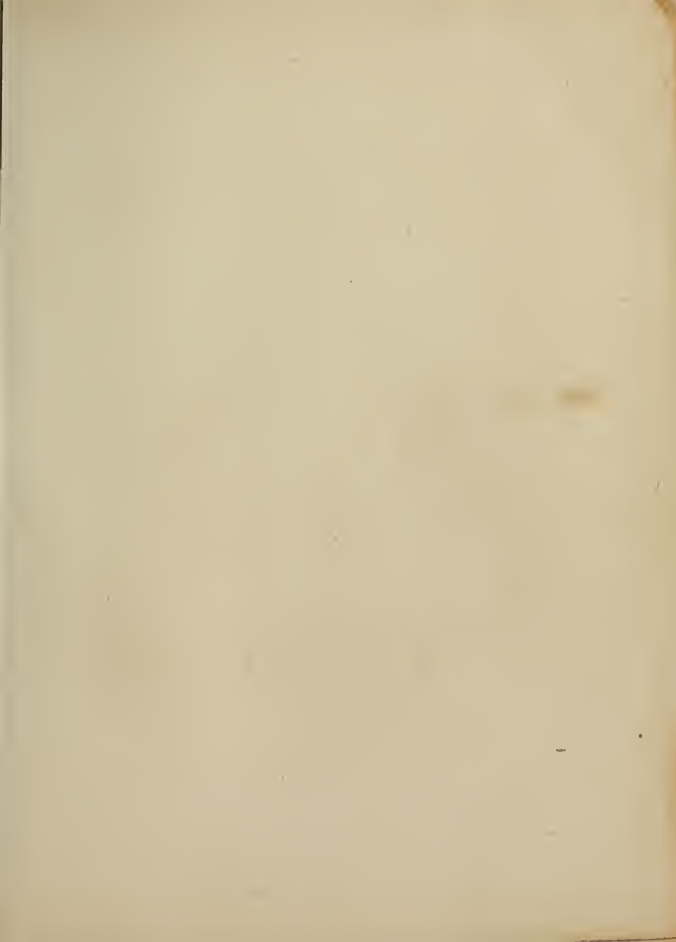


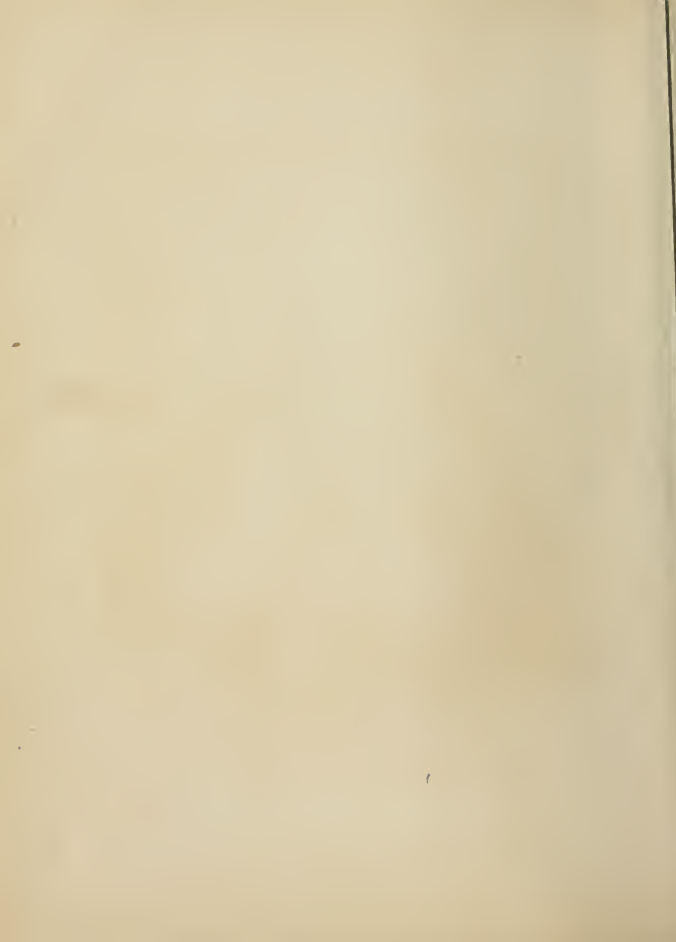


Elizabeth Gore
from her Father

Katharine F. Richmond.
May 12, 1931.
from the Cates







BLESSING THE BREAD.



When, at the feast, the board was spread,
He pour'd the wine, and brake the bread;
And bless'd, as, with affection true,
He gave them to His faithful few!

SCRIPTURE HISTORY

BY
The Rev.
A. FLETCHER.



ANGEL APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS.

Luke II, ver. 8-14.

SCRIPTURE HISTORY,

DESIGNED FOR

THE IMPROVEMENT OF YOUTH.

BY THE

REV. ALEXANDER FLETCHER,

AUTHOR OF

"THE FAMILY DEVOTIONS," "LECTURES TO CHILDREN," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH 242 ENGRAVINGS.

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The shadowy types of ancient days
Through Christ are brightness to the view;
And Prophecy in Him displays
Its source, and its fulfilment too !

SCRIPTURE HISTORY.

PROPHECIES RELATING TO CHRIST.

THE prophecies respecting Christ are exceedingly numerous, plain, minute, and striking. Our narrow limits will only allow us to present a few as a specimen. Here it is proper to observe, that all the promises given respecting Christ in the Old Testament, are prophesies, as well as promises.

We may notice the following, namely, the promise given to Adam and Eve, the promise given to Abraham, the promise uttered by Jacob, the promise uttered by Moses, one of the prophecies delivered by David, and one delivered by Isaiah.

The promise delivered to Adam and Eve was given to them by God himself in the garden of Eden, when our first parents had fallen into sin, and were trembling in despair, as they thought, on the very brink of hell ! It was addressed to the serpent ; and oh, it is memorable and glorious ! It is this, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The seed of the woman is Christ. Satan bruised Christ's heel in his sufferings. Christ shall bruise his head in his glorious triumphs over that powerful foe.

The following promise and prophecy respecting Christ was delivered to Abraham immediately by God himself. Gen. xxii. 18, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Here Jesus is the promised SEED, who, after the flesh, was a descendant of Abraham and Isaac.

Jacob, on his dying bed, delivered the following promise of Christ in the presence of all his sons, Gen. xlix. 10 : "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come ; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Jesus is Shiloh. He has come. And all the nations of the earth shall flee to his standard.

Moses delivered the following prophecy respecting Christ, Deut. xviii. 17, 18 : "And the Lord said unto me, I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth." This prophecy is fulfilled, and the Divine Prophet has appeared.

David prophesied, Psalm cx. 1, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This prophecy is fulfilled.

Isaiah prophesied, "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." This is accomplished ! He prophesied, "He is cut out of the land of the living." Look to Calvary's cross, and see the fulfilment of this prediction !

JESUS MIRACULOUSLY FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.
Mark VI, ver. 41.



He look'd to Heav'n, and bless'd, and brake ;
And bade his lov'd Disciples take,
The food, by miracle endued
With power to feed the multitude !

BLESSING THE BREAD.

THE Evangelist St. Matthew gives the following account of our Saviour blessing the BREAD, at the interesting time when the Holy Sacrament of the Supper was first instituted, and first observed, chap. xxvi. 26—30: “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.”

As an account of the Last Supper will be given in another part of this work, we will at present only consider the spiritual meaning of the bread, and our Saviour blessing the bread.

First, consider the *spiritual meaning* of the bread. The body of Christ is particularly represented by bread. When Jesus took the bread in the presence of his disciples, he said, “This is my body.” He did not mean it was his real body, but he meant that it represented his body. Let my young friends remember, that there is a great deal more meant than his

literal body. It represented all his human nature suffered, and also all the blessings he purchased by the sufferings his human nature endured. Bread is made from corn. The corn cannot be bread till it is bruised by the heavy mill-stone. And then it must be put into the hot oven, before it can be fit for the food of man. Before Christ can be the bread of life for the souls of men, women, and children, he must be bruised by the mill-stone of divine wrath, and he must be cast into the oven of God's anger! Was this the case? O, yes! "It pleased the Lord to bruise him?"

When Jesus took up the bread, he *blessed* it. He set it apart for a holy sacramental purpose, by prayer and thanksgiving. In the Christian Church and at the sacramental table, the bread is set apart for a holy purpose. That is, it is solemnly set apart for bringing to the remembrance of believers, the Lord Jesus Christ in his human nature, in his sufferings, in his death, and in all the blessings of his purchase. Ministers in following the example of Christ, pray that this effect may be produced; namely, that communicants may remember when they take the bread into their hands, and into their mouths, that Jesus suffered and died for them, and that he has purchased for them by his death those blessings which will be the comfort, nourishment, and joy of their souls for ever and ever.

ANGEL APPEARING TO ZACHARIAS.

Luke I. ver. II.



Beside the Altar lo ! a Seraph stands ;
The Priest is struck with terror and surprise :
And bows his head, and spreads his trembling hands ;
"Fear not, thy pray'r is heard"—the Angel cries !

ANGEL APPEARING TO ZACHARIAS.

LUKE I. 11. A. M. 3999.

JOHN the Baptist was appointed to be the forerunner of Christ. This was one of the highest, if not the very highest, of sacred offices that was ever filled by any human being from the days of Adam to the present time. And we can conceive no office that shall equal it, even till the close of ages, when the mighty angel shall sound his trumpet to awake the dead.

His father's name was Zacharias. He lived in the days of Herod the king of Judea. He was a priest of eminent piety, of the course of Abia, and often ministered in the temple. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. The Evangelist gives them the highest character for piety. They were both righteous. O, how lovely, when husband and wife are both arrayed in the garments of salvation, and filled with the Holy Ghost! These excellent individuals gave the most satisfying evidences and proofs of their piety. They walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Blessed character! And this is the character of those who were the parents of the Forerunner of our Saviour. So important was the part which John was appointed to perform, that a messenger was dispatched on purpose

from heaven to make known to Zacharias, that he in his old age should be the father of a most wonderful child, who should be employed in the singular office of preparing the way of the Lord.

The angel that was sent on this errand was Gabriel. He came to Zacharias when he was in the temple burning incense before the Lord. This celestial messenger appeared on the right side of the altar of incense. Zacharias was overwhelmed with fear, when he beheld the glorious angel. He could not tell but he might be a messenger of wrath, and not of mercy. God very soon, and very graciously, dispelled his fears.

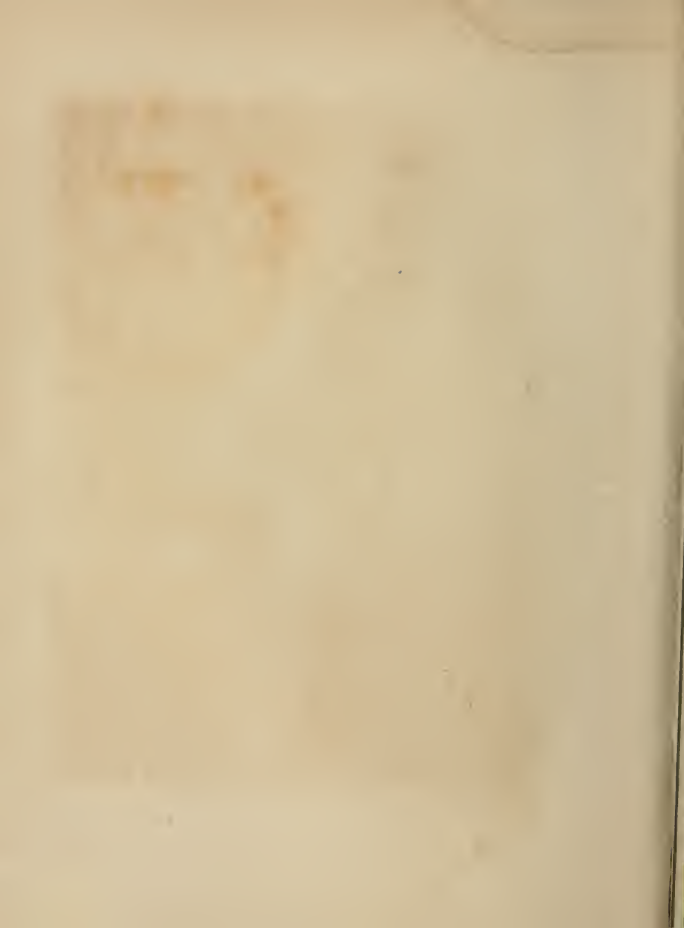
The angel told him, that his wife Elizabeth should bear a son. They prayed for a son. Their prayer was accepted. The angel informed them that the name of their son should be JOHN, which signifies, *Grace of the Lord*. He told them their son would be the source of great gladness to them, and great joy to multitudes. He also stated that he would rank high in the divine favour, that he would abstain from wine and strong drink, be remarkably holy, and filled with the Holy Ghost. O, what a lovely character ! Blessed are those parents, whose children in any degree resemble the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth. To crown all, the angel told him his son should be raised to the most honourable work, that in the spirit of Elijah he should prepare a people for the Lord.

NAZARETH.

Luke l. ver. 26.



Can any good from Nazareth spring forth,
Nathaniel said—and is it ask'd by thee;
Be this thine answer wouldst thou know its worth,
Behold the Scriptures, Sinner, come and see.



NAZARETH.

LUKE I. 26.

NAZARETH was a small city, which belonged to the tribe of Zebulon, in Galilee. It is distant from Jerusalem about seventy-two miles north of that city; about ten to the north-west of Mount Tabor; and twenty-five west from the point where the Jordan issues from the Sea of Galilee. This town was the place where our Lord resided after the time of his return from Egypt, till the time he entered upon his public ministry. In all ages it has excited great interest in the minds of christian travellers, in connexion with Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Bethlehem is interesting, as the town where our Saviour was born, —Jerusalem as the city where our Saviour died,—and Nazareth as the place where our Saviour resided for the greater part of the time he dwelt on earth. It was so obscure and insignificant, that it is not so much as mentioned once in the Old Testament; and no Jewish historians speak of it, except as the birth-place of Jesus.

It is built in a valley, on the top of a hill. Thus it is both situated on a hill, and in a valley. Dr. Richardson gives the following account of its situation: —“The vale resembles a circular basin, surrounded by mountains. It seems as if fifteen mountains meet to form an enclosure for this delightful spot. They rise round it like the edge of a shell, to guard it from

intrusion. It is a rich and beautiful field in the midst of barren mountains. It abounds in fig-trees, small gardens, and hedges of the prickly pear ; and the dense rich grass affords an abundant pasture. The village stands on an elevated situation, on the west side of the valley." This is the description of the spot where our Saviour was brought up, and where nearly the whole of his life was spent. This place, also, had been the abode of Mary, his mother, and of Joseph, his supposed father.

It was noted for the wickedness of its inhabitants. Nathanael said unto Philip, " Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ? " This intimated plainly, that Nathanael never heard of any good person belonging to that place ; and therefore that its inhabitants must have been generally of a description the most profligate and depraved.

Though our Saviour spent nearly his whole life in this city, the inhabitants despised his ministry ; and on one occasion their enmity rose to such a pitch of violence, that they attempted to murder him, by casting him headlong from the brow of the hill, where their city was built.

Because Jesus dwelt at Nazareth, he was called a NAZARENE ; and thus the prophecies, which represented him as a *Nazir*, were in some measure fulfilled. As a mark of contempt, the Jews called the followers of Jesus *Nazarenes*.

The place now contains from 700 to 1,000 inhabitants.

ANNUNCIATION.

Luke l. ver. 28.



Hail ! highly favor'd, said the Seraph bright ,
Descending swiftly in the Virgin's sight ,
For thee has Heav'n this wondrous grace design'd ,
To bear the babe that shall redeem mankind .



ANNUNCIATION.

LUKE I. 28. A. M. 3998.

THE virgin mother of our Lord was MARY. This name is of the same meaning with MIRIAM, and signifies, the *Lady* or *Mistress of the briny sea*. The name also signifies *exalted*. And it was a great exaltation to this humble woman, to be favoured above all the daughters of the royal house of David, yea, above all the daughters of Adam, from the beginning to the end of time, to be the mother of our Lord, the Saviour of men.

She was a daughter of the royal house of Judah, and was regularly descended from David, the first king of that tribe. Though she was in poor and low circumstances, yet the genealogy of her family was preserved, and she was acknowledged to be of the *house of David*. Mary was a *virgin* before and after our Saviour was born. It was necessary he should be born of a virgin, and that miraculously, by the power of the Holy Ghost. If you ask, What rendered this necessary? It was that our Saviour might be holy, harmless, undefiled with original sin, and separate from sinners.

The angel Gabriel was sent from heaven to inform her, that she was appointed of God to be the mother of the Saviour of men. He found her in a small town called Nazareth, and situated in Galilee. O what an important embassy it was, to be sent from heaven, to

announce, to make known to Mary, *she* was to be the mother of our Lord! How sweet the salutation with which he addressed her, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." She was indeed highly favoured of God, and more than any could ever be favoured, for only one could be the mother of our Lord, and she was that highly favoured ONE. This announcement threw the holy, humble Mary, into a state of great consternation. But the angel soon delivered her from her fears, and filled her with great joy. He proceeds at once to inform her how *she* was so favoured by God.

He said, "And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. And the angel departed from her."

It is thus that Christ is, by way of eminence, the "Seed of the woman."

MEETING OF MARY AND ELIZABETH.

Luke I. ver. 40.



When Mary to meet with Elizabeth sped ,
Elizabeth hail'd her bright doom ,
And blessed art thou among Women she said
And blest is the fruit of thy Womb !



MEETING OF MARY AND ELIZABETH.

LUKE I. 40. A. M. 3998.

MARY and Elizabeth were two women, the most highly favoured of God among all the descendants of Adam. They were closely related together as friends by natural connexion ; but they were far more intimately connected together by the ties of grace. And what a wonderful bond of union was this in addition ! Mary was the mother of Jesus, the Messiah, and Elizabeth was the mother of John, the appointed and predicted forerunner of the Saviour of men. We must then acknowledge that these two women, and saints, and mothers, were two of the most remarkable personages that ever appeared on the face of the earth.

The angel Gabriel informed Mary, that her cousin Elizabeth had conceived a son in her old age, and that she had been with child six months. On receiving this intelligence, Mary immediately undertook a long journey, as far distant as Judah, that she might visit and congratulate her cousin Elizabeth, on account of the great smiles of her God, in the evening of her days. As soon as she entered the house, and delivered her salutation, the babe leaped in the womb of Elizabeth. Immediately, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and gave utterance to the following remarkable expressions ; "Blessed art thou among women, and

blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy! And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."

Mary also was filled with the Holy Ghost, and in reply to Elizabeth, gave utterance to a song of praise, in strains lofty and sublime. "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Here you see her faith; now mark her humility. "For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name." Observe her astonishment at God's mercy! "And his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with his arm, he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy. As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever."

Blessed Mary! All generations shall call her blessed!

ST. JOHN PROPHECYING.

Luke i. ver. 80.



The Prophet-Child in stature grew,
And mix'd strong in spirit too;
And in the desert lov'd to dwell
Till he was shewn to Israel.



ST. JOHN PROPHECYING.

LUKE I. 80. A. M. 3398.

JOHN the Baptist was the celebrated forerunner of our Lord, and the Elias, or Elijah, of the New Testament. It was he of whom Malachi thus prophesied,—“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” Mal. iv. 5, 6.

When Gabriel the angel informed Zacharias that he should have a son in his old age, and that this son should be the messenger, to prepare the way of the Lord, Zacharias doubted the word of the angel, and asked a token to convince him that what he had spoken would take place. This was sinful in Zacharias, and offended God. The angel certainly said he should receive a token; and the token was this, that he should remain dumb till the child was born. Accordingly, his speech left him in an instant of time. Eight days after the child was born, when the circumcision was about to take place, the friends wished to give him the name of his father, and call him *Zacharias*. The mother, Elizabeth, knew from the angel that his name should be *John*. At this time the mouth of Zacharias was opened, and his tongue was loosed, and to the

great amazement of all who were present, he spake and praised God. The people said, "What manner of child shall this be?" The father at the same time was filled with the Holy Ghost, and under his immediate inspiration uttered, and sung a song of praise, proclaiming the great things God had done, and would do for his church. Then turning to the babe, he looked upon him, and thus addressed him in the language of prophecy: "And thou, child, shalt be called The Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercies of our God: whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace."

We know very little of John from the time this song was sung by his father, till the days when he entered upon his public ministry. The evangelist Luke says, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." We must not suppose that he lived as a hermit, cut off from the society of men, and the people of God. It is reasonable to suppose that he went up to Jerusalem at the feasts. But his time was chiefly spent in the wilderness, in holy meditation, and fellowship with God.

ANGEL APPEARING TO JOSEPH.

Matt. II. ver. 19.



Awake, arise, the Angel said,
And bear the Child to Israel's land,
For they who sought its life are dead,
And none shall stretch the harming hand!

ANGEL APPEARING TO THE SHEPHERDS.

LUKE II. 8—14. A. M. 4000.

MANY judicious writers have observed with wonder, that when Jesus, the King of kings, and the Saviour of man was born, it was not made known by the angel first to monarchs, or princes, or nobles, or philosophers, or Jewish priests. The angel was not sent first with his message to splendid mansions, or gilded palaces. To whom was he first sent? To whom did he first communicate the joyful tidings of the birth of the Son of God, and the Redeemer of a fallen world? It was to devout and humble shepherds, engaged in watching over their flocks by night. The inspired Evangelist gives the following account of this blessed communication. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe

wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

We have every reason to believe, that these shepherds were holy men. They were humble in their circumstances, but exalted in their piety. They often conversed together on divine things, and particularly spake with great interest about the coming of the long-expected Messiah. Is it not likely that they frequently prayed together among the beautiful little hills near Bethlehem, and cried to God with great earnestness that the promised SHILOH might soon appear? Who can tell, but they had been thus engaged that very night, before the angel visited them, supplicating Israel's God that the promised Messiah would come, according to all the animated predictions of Old-Testament prophets? Oh how God honours prayer! What was their surprise when a heavenly messenger stood before them, shining in the bright rays of heaven's glory! Great was their delight when this lovely angelic visitor informed them that Christ was actually born,—and born in a town very near the place where they fed their flocks, namely, Bethlehem, the city where David was born! That was a joyful night, when their ears listened to the songs of angels!

BETHLEHEM,

Luke II. ver. 4



Though unadorn'd by nature or by art,
Neglected Bethlehem, be glad of heart ;
Midst Judah's Cities proudly lift thy horn ,
For in thee C'hrist the God the Man was born !



BETHLEHEM.

LUKE II. 4. A. M. 4000.

BETHLEHEM was remarkable on two accounts. First, it was remarkable as the birth-place of David; and, secondly, it was remarkable as the place where Christ, the Saviour of men, was born. We cannot help looking with great interest on particular spots and places, where great events have taken place. I looked with great interest on the fields and plains of Waterloo, where a most wonderful battle was fought, and where a victory was won, which decided the fate of empires and kings. I have looked with great interest on the vale of Runnymede, where Magna Charta received the royal seal of King John, and thus secured great privileges to the English nation, which have continued from those days to the present time. But oh, with what infinitely greater interest must a pious and devout mind look upon the city of Bethlehem, where Jesus the Saviour was born!

Bethlehem is a Hebrew word, and signifies the *house of bread*. What a suitable name for the birth-place of Him who is the *bread of life*! Jesus said of himself, "I am the bread of life. I am the true bread which came down from heaven. He that eateth my body, and drinketh my blood, shall live for ever." How striking, that the town where our Saviour wa

born should be called BETHLEHEM, the house of bread !

Bethlehem was a city of Judah, about six miles south of Jerusalem, and very pleasantly situated on the declivity of a hill. The prophet Micah calls it Bethlehem Ephratah. This city was never considerable for wealth or extent ; but it was important as the birth-place of Elimelech, Boaz, David ; but, above all, of Jesus, the root and offspring of David. It was here Rachel, the wife of Jacob, was buried, of which Moses gives the following striking account, Gen. xxxv. 16, 18, 19: " And they journeyed from Bethel, and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath : and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing,—for she died,—that she called his name Benoni, but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is in Bethlehem."

This town is still much visited by pilgrims. Here there are three convents,—one of the Latin, another of the Greek, and a third of the Armenian Christians. Here they show the stable where our Saviour was born ; the manger in which he was laid, instead of a cradle ; and the grotto where he, and his mother, and Joseph, lay hid from the rage of Herod, before they departed to Egypt. At a little distance is shown the place where the angels appeared to the shepherds.



THE NATIVITY.

Luke II ver. 2



Not in the Palace, with its Halls of state,
Where crouching slaves, and watchful Warriors wait;
But in the Stable, with the beasts around,
The King of Kings a new born Babe is found !

THE NATIVITY.

LUKE II. 7. A.M. 4000.

THERE WAS a time fixed by the immutable decree of the Eternal Jehovah, when Jesus should be born. That time is called in Scripture the *fulness of time*. When that time arrived, the Son of God appeared incarnate, made of a woman, and in the form of a feeble infant. O, unfathomable mystery !

The evangelist Luke gives the following account of the time, place, and manner of our Saviour's birth :—
 “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, into the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David,) to be taxed, with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.”

Be amazed, ye young ; this is the affecting and humbling account of the birth of your Saviour, the birth of the greatest personage on whom the eyes of angels ever looked, the birth of Jehovah's only-begotten and eternal Son !

Our blessed Lord was born in the days of Augustus Cæsar, when the Roman empire was more extensive than in any other period of its history. It included Parthia on the east, and Britain on the west. It was called *Terrarum orbis imperium*, or, the empire of the whole world ; for there was scarcely any part of the civilized world that was not dependent upon it. When our Saviour was born, that prophecy of Daniel began to be fulfilled, Dan. ii. 4 : “ In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.”

The place where our Saviour was born is observable : it was Bethlehem, as foretold by the prophet Micah. Jesus, after the flesh, was the son of David, of the royal line, and therefore was born in the city of David. The circumstance which led to the exact fulfilment of this prophecy, that he should be born in Bethlehem, was the command of Cæsar, that all his subjects should be *taxed* ; that is, have their names regularly enrolled. Joseph and Mary belonging to the family of David, went to the city of David, namely, Bethlehem, and at that very time Jesus was born, and the prediction was literally fulfilled.

How truly affecting the circumstances of his birth ! He was the son of a *poor*, though a pious woman. He was born *at* an inn, to show he came to sojourn for a season in our world. He was born in a stable, as if rejected of men. He was laid in a manger, where cattle fed,—**HE** who came as the bread of life !

WISDOMEN'S STAR,
Mat. II ver. 10



A Star of wondrous beauty led
The Magi to the humble bed,
In which, a Babe the Saviour lay,
Who came to take our Sins away.



WISE MEN'S STAR.

MATT. II. 10. A.M. 4000.

THE Wise Men of the East were guided by a mysterious and supernatural star, from their own country to Judea. They had never seen this star before, nor any star bearing any resemblance to it. As wise men, as philosophers, and we may add, as astronomers, they had often examined, and observed, and studied the stars. Their surprise must have been great when they saw this star of unusual appearance, and of uncommon glory. We cannot attempt a description of this star. It is probable, however, that it appeared in the lower regions of the sky. The whole of the inhabitants of the country, who saw the star, must have been greatly amazed, and filled with fear. It was very natural for them to conclude that some great event was to take place. They might suppose God was about to visit them in his anger, and that he sent this star as a fore-runner of wrath and destruction. Oh, how different the case ! It was not the messenger of wrath, but of love. It was not the messenger of destruction, but of salvation. It was a morning star. It was a star sent to tell the nations and the world that the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS was about to appear.

We cannot think that all who saw the star, knew it was the star which was sent to declare the birth of

Jesus, the king of the Jews, and the Saviour of men. But the wise men knew it. How did they obtain this knowledge? It was not by their own wisdom. It was not by their learned books. It was by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It was an angel who was employed to make known the birth of Christ to the Jewish shepherds; and it was by a bright and supernatural star, that God made known the birth of Jesus to Gentile philosophers. Thus God has employed various methods in communicating his will, and in making known his mercy to man, at different periods of the history of the church. The wise men were not only divinely instructed that the great Messiah was born, but they were stirred up, inclined, and directed, to go in search of this infant prince. For this purpose, they went from the East to Jerusalem. They were filled with an holy impatience, made speedy preparation for their lengthened journey, and actually arrived at Jerusalem, not far distant from the place where the infant Jesus was found. Blessed are they who wish to find Jesus, and who seek him diligently in his ordinances! "They shall know, who follow on to know the Lord." In Jerusalem, they learned that Jesus should be born in Bethlehem. The STAR again appeared. They followed their guide. It stood over the cottage where Jesus was found. Then it disappeared, and was seen no more.



WISE MEN'S OFFERING.

Matt. II ver. II.



Perfumes sweet, and fragrant spice,
Gold, and gems of costly price,
Offerings to the new born King
Eastern Sages humbly bring!

WISE MEN'S OFFERING.

MATT. II. 11. A.M. 4000.

THE Wise Men presenting offerings of great value at the feet of Christ, when an infant in Bethlehem, is a circumstance connected with a very important part of sacred history. In the days of Herod the king, commonly called *Herod the Great*, Wise Men from the East came to Jerusalem to make inquiry respecting the birth of the Messiah. They also said, they had seen his star, and were come to worship him.

Here it may be proper, as far as we are able, to give some account of these *Wise Men*. The original name in the Greek is *MAGOI*. Hence they are commonly called, in our language, *Magi*, or *Magicians*. Among the Persians the *Magi* were their philosophers and their priests. They were held in such estimation, that none were even allowed to be their kings, unless they were first enrolled among the *Magi*. Those who dealt in unlawful arts were also called *MAGOI* in Scripture, such as Simon Magus, and Elymas the Sorcerer. Whether the Wise Men who came to visit the infant Jesus were magicians and sorcerers, or whether of the sect of the Persian magicians, who believed two subordinate principles, one of good, and another of evil, and detested images and temples, and worshipped God, only under the emblem of fire; or whether they were only philosophers; we cannot determine. We know posi-

tively they came from the East ; that is, some country or nation lying very considerably to the east of Judea ; but we cannot tell whether they came from Persia, Chaldea, or Eastern Arabia. If the knowledge of the particular place from which they came had been of any real importance, it would have been communicated : as it would not, it is left in obscurity.

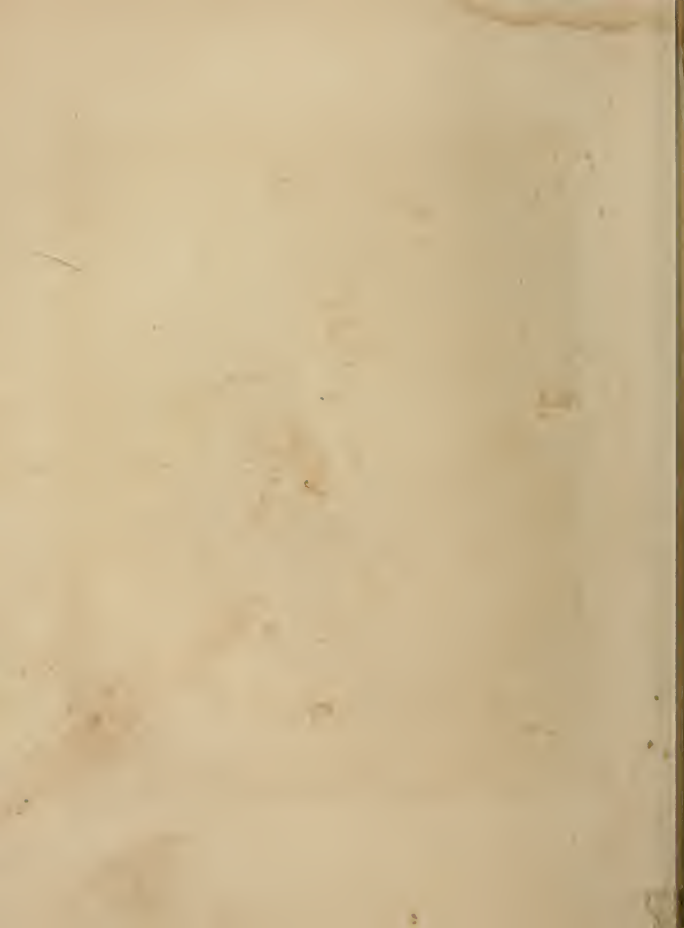
The arrival of the *Magi* in Jerusalem excited a great sensation. The object of their visit greatly affected their king. He sent for the Wise Men, and had an interview with them. He desired them, if they found Jesus at Bethlehem, to return and tell him the tidings. They went and found the child, but were warned of God not to return and tell Herod. What must have been their surprise, when they found the new-born prince, not in a royal palace, attended by soldiers as life-guards, but in a humble cottage, in a poor and mean habitation, and in the arms of his mother, a woman in circumstances humble and indigent. But they knew *it was Jesus*. The blazing star stood immediately above the cottage, and poured down upon the lowly habitation the lustre of its glorious rays. They entered ; they saw the child with his mother ; they fell down before him, and worshipped him. Lovely sight ! Then they opened their treasures, and they presented to him gifts, consisting of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Being warned of God, they returned into their own land. Young friends, present *yourselves* to Jesus a living sacrifice. Amen.

SIMEON'S BENEDICTION.

Luke II. ver. 29.



Now lettest thou my soul in peace depart,
The good Man cried, as in his arms he prest
The holy Child, and from his inmost heart,
The God of Heav'n for Man's salvation blest.



SIMEON'S BENEDICTION.

LUKE II. 29. A. M. 4000.

EIGHT days after our Saviour was born, his name was called Jesus. According to the law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought him to Jerusalem, to present him before the Lord. At the same time, there lived in that city a most pious, excellent aged man, called Simeon. He was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. What a character! What a privilege! What an honour! He stood exceedingly high in the enjoyment of the Divine favour. As an evidence of this, it was communicated to him by the immediate inspiration of the Divine Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Great must have been his desire to see the Messiah, who had been promised to the church and the world for nearly four thousand years. Simeon had no wish to live any longer on earth, except to enjoy the blessedness and delight of seeing Christ before he fell asleep in the arms of death. He was fully assured that he should most certainly see Christ with the eyes of his body, before the earthly house of this tabernacle was dissolved.

Directed by the Spirit, he came to the temple, at the very time the parents brought the child Jesus, to do unto him after the custom of the law. The moment he fixed his eyes upon the child, he knew it was Jesus

What must have been the surprise of Mary, when the venerable, aged saint came up to her, with feeble, trembling steps, and requested permission to take the child into his arms ! When he took him up into his arms, he blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word : for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people : a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Joseph and the mother marvelled at the things which were spoken of Simeon. Then the holy man, who was on the very brink of the glories of heaven, blessed *them*, and said unto Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and the rising again of many in Israel ; and for a sign which shall be spoken against ; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also :) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

See the readiness of Simeon to die. His soul was saved, his heart was changed, his sins were pardoned. Only such are ready to die. See also his willingness to die : "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace !" The death of a saint is only a *departure* from earth to heaven. It was the sight of Christ which made him so willing to die. May we by faith see Christ as our Saviour,—may we embrace him with the arms of love ; then, like Simeon, we shall be ready, we shall be willing to die !

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Matt. II ver. 14.



Warn'd by an Angel, Joseph takes, by night
To Egypt's land his Heav'n-appointed flight ;
And thus while fears of Herods pow'r are still'd
The words of Prophecy are well fulfill'd .

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

MATT. II. 14. A.M. 4000.

GREAT must have been the wonder of Mary and Joseph, when the Wise Men from the East came into their humble dwelling. Their surprise must have increased when the Wise Men fell down at the feet of the babe, and worshipped him. Their surprise must still have increased, when they presented their offerings of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. They never were so enriched before, and might readily exclaim, What can all this mean! Their flight to Egypt for the preservation of the child's life, is an answer to this question of surprise. Of themselves, they were not able to bear the expense of a journey so distant, the expense of their residence in that country, and the expense of their return to their own land. For this purpose they are assisted and enriched out of the very treasures of eastern and distant lands.

Almost immediately after the Wise Men departed, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, and thus addressed him, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." Immediately he prepared for the flight. "He arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt." There they remained until the death of Herod, that it

might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

We may remark on this very astonishing piece of sacred history, that an *angel* is employed to tell Joseph of the great danger to which he and his family were exposed. Before Joseph was allied to Jesus, he was not accustomed to angels' visits. What an honour ; a saint in the humblest circumstances in life waited on by messengers from the throne of heaven !

Alas, how soon, and how violently the rage of kings was manifested against Jesus ! The angel said, "Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." This cruel king thought that the young child would rise up to great temporal power, and hurl him down from his throne ; therefore he was determined at once to prevent it, by putting him to death. But Herod's purpose shall not be accomplished. There is a place of refuge provided for the infant Jesus, in the land of Egypt, and on the banks of the Nile. Joseph, at the command of the angel, instantly obeyed. It was not safe to begin the journey by day ; he therefore departed at night. Israel came from Egypt to Canaan, and now Israel's Saviour is carried for safety from Canaan to Egypt.

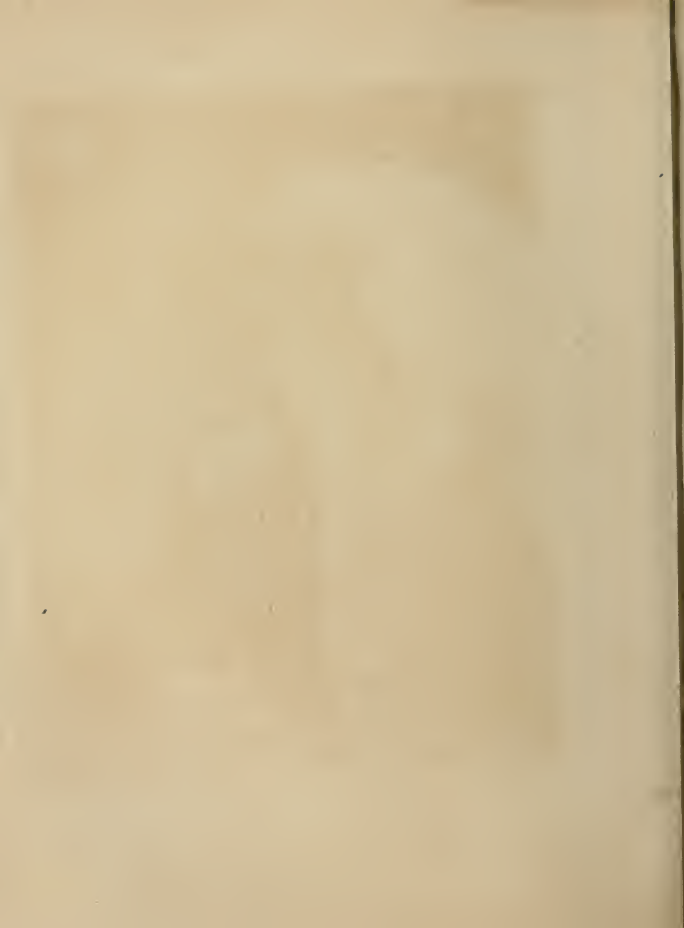
There is a remarkable tradition, that when the holy family entered Egypt, and went into one of their temples, all the images of their gods were overthrown by an invisible power, and fell like Dagon before the ark.

MURDER OF THE INNOCENTS.

Matt. II, ver. 16.



Vainly are the Children prest
To the Mothers burning breast ;
Infant blood around is pour'd ,
By the Monster Monarch's sword !



MURDER OF THE INNOCENTS.

MATT. II. 16. A. M. 4000.

THE inspired writer gives the following account of one of the blackest crimes that stains the history of fallen man, namely, the barbarous murder of a large number of children, from two years old and under.

“Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise Men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time he had diligently inquired of the Wise Men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.”

When the Wise Men left Herod, they promised to return, and tell him all the particulars respecting Jesus, the new-born Prince. By the directions of an angel, they were prevented from fulfilling their intentions. The king waited for them with great anxiety. It was evidently his design, as soon as he had received information where the young king was born, to have sent and murdered him, and thus lay aside all fears that he should rise up, and deprive him of his kingly power. He was of course greatly disappointed, because the Wise Men did not return. He was exceeding

wroth. He thought to crush Jesus at once, and thus render himself more sure in the enjoyment of that regal power which he never deserved.

He is determined that he shall not be altogether disappointed in his hopes. He contrives a plan for the murder of Jesus, which shows he was, in a most pre-eminent degree, a child of Satan, the first rebel, and the first murderer. His plan was this, to slay all the children in Bethlehem and the surrounding coasts, from two years old and under, expecting that Jesus would certainly be one of the number. We wonder that such a thought should ever enter the heart of the most wicked of men, for there is something about children and babes which call for the kindness and protection of the worst of human beings. Herod was peculiarly blood-thirsty. He slew three of his own sons, Alexander, Aristobulus, and Antipater.

Were monsters found to execute the bloody and infernal purpose? Alas, alas, such monsters in human shape were found! They went immediately from the throne of the hateful tyrant to Bethlehem. They took the babes from the cradle, and also from their mothers' bosoms, and murdered them before their eyes! No cries, no tears, no shrieks of woe could produce upon the murderers the slightest impression of compunction. They began, they went through, they finished their deeds of blood. Great was the lamentation! Mothers wept for their murdered babes, and refused to be comforted, because they were not.

ANGEL APPEARING TO JOSEPH.

MATT. II. 19. A. M. 4000.

WE know nothing of the particulars of the history of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, while they sojourned in Egypt. There they were, at a distance from the temple and public service of God, and dwelt among idolaters. But though they were far from the temple of the Lord, they were not far from the Lord of the temple. They had *him* with them, who in his divinity is the object of religious worship, and whose presence converts a cottage, or a cave, or a dungeon, into a temple.

Joseph had several visits from angels. We have considered two. A third visit is paid him in Egypt. He was commanded to remain in that country till God should give him word to depart. At last, the appointed time arrived when he should return, and an angel is sent to deliver the tidings. When Herod the tyrant, the murderer, and the monster, was dead, "behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life."

The death of Herod makes way for the return of Jesus. The death of the murderer makes way for the divine Saviour. Some writers think that Herod only lived three months after the murder of the infants. It

is a heart-revolting thought, that it was very soon after he committed his hellish act, his soul was cast into hell. He had no pity on helpless babes and weeping mothers, and therefore he was sent to that world where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, but where there is no pity! O may the young think of the miseries of hell, and be persuaded to avoid those sins which lead to such miseries! Joseph instantly obeyed the angel. "He arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel." That Providence which watched over and preserved them in their long, and dreary, and dangerous journey from Judea to Egypt, preserved them in Egypt, and brought them back in safety to the land of Israel. The sun, though very sultry, did not smite them by day, and the moon, though accompanied by intense cold, did not smite them by night.

When Joseph returned, he heard that Archelaus the son of Herod reigned in the stead of his father. The account he received of his character was far from favourable. He feared that if the son should have it in his power, he would attempt to do to Jesus what the father attempted. He therefore receives the honour of a visit from God, probably by the ministry of an angel. He told him to turn aside into the parts of Galilee. "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled what was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."



HOLY FAMILY.

Luke II ver. 40



Oft the Child was fondly prest
To the Mothers happy breast,
As He strong in spirit grew,
Fill'd with grace, and wisdom too.

HOLY FAMILY.

LUKE II. 40. A. M. 4000.

IN speaking of the *Holy Family*, there are several things to be considered, very worthy of observation.

The *members* of the family. They were three in number. There are in the Holy Trinity three Persons, and in this holy family there were three members, Jesus, Joseph, and Mary. Joseph was the *supposed* father of our Lord, while as man our Saviour had no father. The name *Joseph* signifies fruitfulness. Though he was not the real, but supposed father of Jesus, he had the paternal care of HIM, who is the everlasting Father, whose spiritual offspring, before the close of ages, will be countless as the stars of heaven. Joseph was by profession a *carpenter*. Jesus was not committed to the paternal care of a philosopher, or a minister of state, or a monarch. No,—he was committed to the affectionate guardianship of a carpenter, an humble, but pious mechanic. He had not the riches of this world, but he had the riches of grace. He had not the soft and costly attire of princes, but he was clothed with the garments of salvation. Though of royal descent, he had no expectation of an earthly diadem, but he waited for the salvation of Israel. The genealogy of Joseph is given by St. Matthew. There it appears he was, adding three omitted, the thirty-

second in descent from David, in the royal line of Solomon. O how mysterious ! Jesus remained with Joseph, and laboured at his humble employment, till he was thirty years of age.

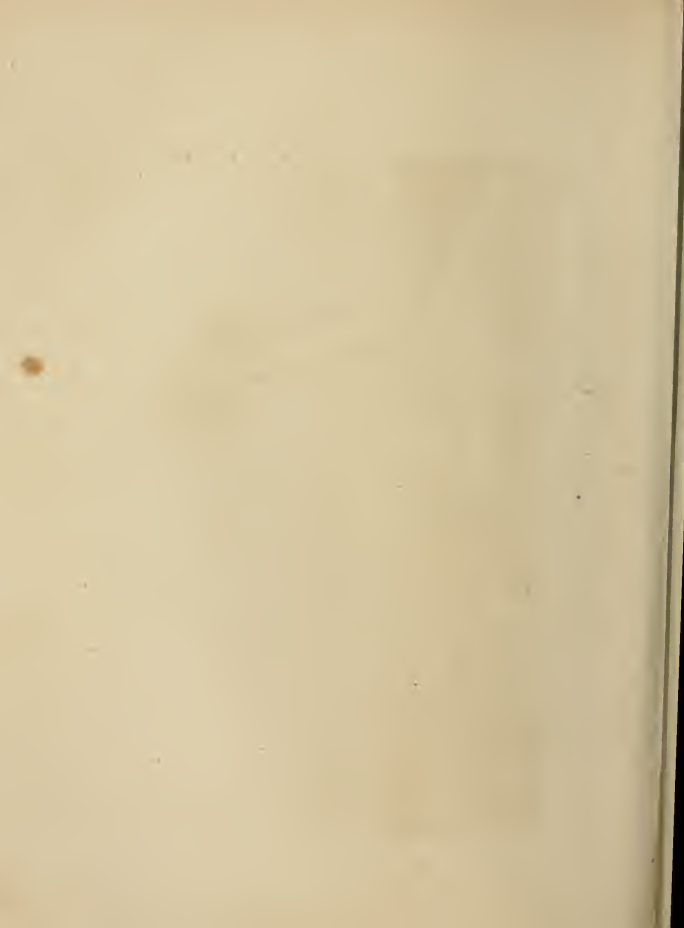
MARY was the virgin mother of our Lord ; and ever since has been called, by way of eminence, the *Virgin Mary*. She was the daughter of Eli, of the royal but then debased family of David. It is striking to think, that the name ELI signifies *my God*. Little was Eli aware that his daughter should bear a Son, in whose humanity the Deity should dwell, and who also should be named Emmanuel, that is, *God with us*. She lived at Nazareth, and was there betrothed in marriage to Joseph, of the same royal descent with herself. Never was woman so honoured ! She conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. She brought forth that Child in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. She presented the world with a Saviour who was destined to bruise the serpent's head.

The most illustrious member of this family was JESUS. We have the following short but interesting account of his early days : “ And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom ; and the grace of God was upon him.” In his humanity shone the most amazing intellectual powers, and moral excellencies. When a child, he showed greater wisdom than Solomon. There was no question put to him by the learned Jewish Doctors, which he could not answer. Though only twelve years of age, wisdom irradiated him with glory.

20 DEER IS A L. E. M.
Luke II. ver. 41



Behold the City of the glorious King,
Happy Jerusalem; where every year
The Jewish tribes their offerings loved to bring,
And in the Temple of their God appear.



JERUSALEM.

LUKE II. 41.

JERUSALEM was the most remarkable city of Canaan. On many accounts it was the most remarkable city that was ever built. The name signifies, the *vision of perfect peace*. When we consider the temple and its worship, but, above all, Jesus, who appeared in the second temple, and preached upon the streets of Jerusalem, as the Prince of peace, we may see some reason why the name was given to it. This city was also known by the names Jebus, and Salem. It is situated about twenty-five miles westward of Jordan, and forty-two eastward of the Mediterranean Sea. It was built on an eminence, commanding a most enchanting view, and surrounded by hills on all sides. There is some reason to believe that it was as ancient as Melchizedek, and to have been the capital where that remarkable prince lived and reigned. In the days of Joshua it was one of the most powerful cities of Canaan. This great captain routed and overthrew Adonibezek, its king. The whole city was never completely reduced till the days of David. It was reserved for him, to have the honour of becoming the conquering master of the most famous city upon the face of the earth.

David built a new city, on the north-west end of the other, and both were divided by a valley, running from west to east, between the two hills of Zion on the south, and Acra on the north.

Opposite the north-east end of Zion was built the Temple, on Mount Moriah. This city became very magnificent in the days of David and Solomon. It had the following gates:—the sheep-gate; the fish-gate; the old gate, or gate of Damascus; the high-gate of Benjamin; the gate of Ephraim; the valley-gate; the dung-gate; the fountain-gate; the water-gate; the horse-gate, and the prison-gate. The walls around Jerusalem were about four miles in extent. On these were built several towers. To these the Psalmist refers, Psalm xlviii., when he says, “Tell the towers thereof.”

As the temple which stood in Jerusalem was the residence of the symbols of the Divine presence, Jerusalem became common to all the tribes, who visited it thrice a year, at the solemn feasts.

Few cities have ever suffered such reverses and calamities as Jerusalem. Suffering rose to a height unparalleled, when, about seventy years after Christ, it was taken by the army of Titus, the Roman general. On the one hand, the citizens fell on each other; and then the Roman soldiers, infuriated in the highest degree, fell upon the inhabitants. Titus, their general, could not restrain them from committing the most heart-rending and appalling cruelties.

At present, Jerusalem is a place of about three miles in circumference, poor, and thinly inhabited. Where the Temple and Holy of Holies stood, there is a Mahometan mosque. Thus the gold is become dim, and the most fine gold is changed!



JESUS DISPUTING WITH THE DOCTORS.

Luke II. ver. 46.



Behold the Child, by heav'nly wisdom taught,
Whom long his Parents have with sorrowing sought,
Amidst the Sages in the Temple stand,
And upward point them with his teaching hand.

JESUS DISPUTING WITH THE DOCTORS.

LUKE II. 46. A. D. 12.

THERE is only one thing told us in Scripture respecting Christ, from the days of his infancy till the time he was twenty-nine years of age ;—that is, going up with his parents, to attend the passover at Jerusalem, when he was twelve years of age. It was the custom of Joseph and Mary regularly to visit Jerusalem, and attend the sacred feasts. Though the journey was long, and though they themselves were poor, yet, being eminent for piety, they endured hardships, and attended the feasts. They were indeed glad when it was said unto them, “ Let us go up into the house of the Lord.”

When Jesus was twelve years of age, he went with his parents to Jerusalem. Young friends ! seek grace, to teach and enable you to imitate the example of your blessed Saviour in early piety, and in early attachment to God’s ordinances in his house.

On leaving Jerusalem, the parents of Jesus inadvertently left him behind. They travelled a day’s journey before they missed the holy child. Greatly afflicted, they returned to Jerusalem. They continued their search three days before they found him. Except when Jesus was crucified, these were probably the most sorrowful days they spent in the course of their whole life. They found him at last, after much earnest prayer and careful search. And where did they find

him? “They found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.”

They found Jesus in the temple, in his own house. They should have sought him first in his own house; but they sought him last, where they should have sought him first. The temple did not honour Christ by having him within its walls, but he honoured the temple. Thus, the second temple was more honoured than the first. His parents found him in the midst of the learned doctors, or teachers of the Jewish laws. They found him, in whom were laid up all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, engaged in close and interesting conversation with them, who were the wisest and most learned men Jerusalem could furnish. It is said, he *heard* them, he listened to them; giving us an example that we should be swift to hear. Without this, we never can attain to the heights of wisdom.—Jesus *asked* them questions. They were put with gentleness and humility, but they showed the greatness of his mind, the strength of his faculties, and the amazing extent of his learning.—He returned answers to them. They put many questions to him, but they put none he was not able to answer. He appeared before them as a prodigy of wisdom, of learning, and of grace. Rays of his mediatorial excellence shone forth. Alas! the minds of these learned doctors were blinded! They looked not on him as the promised Messiah.



When ancient types their end had well nigh reach'd,
Thus was the Saviour's coming usher'd in:

His great forerunner to the people preach'd
His great forerunner to the people preach'd
Repentance for the blotting out of sin!

JOHN PREACHING IN THE WILDERNESS.

LUKE III. 3. A. D. 26.

THE inspired Luke informs us, in writing respecting John the Baptist, that “in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Annas and Caiaphas being the High Priests, the word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

The preaching of John in the wilderness was a great event. It was the subject of Old Testament prophecy many hundreds of years before he was born.

This event was so interesting, that the date of it, or the time it took place, is very particularly recorded. It was during the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, (who was the third in regular order, of the Twelve Cæsars,) and who was one of the very worst of men. The viceroys who ruled in the Holy Land, under the Roman emperor, are also mentioned, during the time of whose government John began his public ministry in the wilderness. These were Pontius Pilate, who reigned in Judea; Herod, who reigned in Galilee; Philip, who reigned over Iturea and Trachonitis; and Lysanias, who reigned over Abilene. To make the date more full and complete, the names of the chief ecclesiastical rulers of the Jewish church are mentioned, who, at the time of the event were the chief priests of the Jews. They were Annas and Caiaphas. Indeed, *they* were vile and

execrable men, who stirred up Pilate and the Jewish people, to put Jesus to death. Their hoary hairs were stained with blood !

John preached under an high commission. • “ The word of the Lord came unto John.” *How* it came, whether by a dream, a vision, an angel, or an audible voice, we know not. But it came with such power, that there could be no doubt whatever of its Divine origin. It came to him *in the wilderness*. It did not find him in the crowded city ; it found him in the retirement of the wilderness, where he enjoyed undisturbed fellowship with God.

As soon as he received his commission, he entered upon his work ; he began his active and itinerant labours. He did not confine himself to one spot. He came into all the country about Jordan. The first part of the country that Israel possessed, when they entered Canaan, under the direction of Joshua, was the place where John first began to preach the gospel. He left the desert places, and came into the more populous parts, to prepare the way of the Lord.

The great substance of his sermons is mentioned : it was *repentance*, and the *remission* of sins. The people were greatly estranged from God, and he now calls upon them to forsake their sins, and return. He enforced the duty by a promise, that God was ready to forgive. No doubt he informed them that gracious aid was necessary to enable them to perform the duty of repentance ; and that free grace *alone* was the fountain of the blessing of forgiveness.

VIEW AT THE RIVER JORDAN.
Mat. III. ver. 6.



Blessed stream ! thy banks were trod,
By the new born Sons of God ;
And thy waters, as a sign,
Witness'd to the work divine !

VIEW AT THE RIVER JORDAN.

MATT. III. 6. A. D. 27.

THE spectacle, or sight, which was seen at the river Jordan, was remarkable, impressive, solemn, and animating. A very large assembly of people was collected together, from Jerusalem, and Judea, and from the neighbourhood of Jordan, to hear John the Baptist preaching on the banks of that far-famed river. St. Matthew says, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan; and were baptized of him, confessing their sins."

We cannot read these things without feeling convinced that the view presented upon the banks of Jordan was most striking and heart-stirring. Nothing like it had been witnessed for ages. It will be proper to enter into some particulars. And may the Holy Spirit assist and bless our contemplations!

The *appearance* of the preacher is very minutely described. His raiment consisted of camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins. Though the forerunner of Christ, the King of kings, the brightness of the Father's glory, he did not appear arrayed in costly and shining robes, to attract the attention, and excite

the wonder of the people. This he would have done, if Christ had been only a temporal prince, as the foolish Jews expected. John was *great* in the sight of the Lord, but, like his Master, *mean* in the eyes of the world. As to his *diet*, he did not live on the luxuries of the world. His chief food consisted of locusts and wild honey. The locusts were clean insects, of considerable size, good for food, and easily digested. Wild honey was found in abundance in Judea. Thus John furnished a most remarkable example of temperance and mortification, and very suitable to the doctrine of repentance which he so frequently taught.

When John the Baptist began his public ministry, there was an uncommon excitement; and this excitement was from God. The fame of John very soon spread over the country, far and wide. In a few days he was attended by a vast concourse of people. Thus God honoured John. He was humble; but "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Many appeared to be affected, and impressed by his ministry. As an evidence that his sermons were blessed, a vast number came to him, confessing their sins. The word reached their consciences, and they acknowledged their repentance by confessing their sins. Such as were considered true penitents were baptized, and in this way were publicly declared to be his disciples.

Holy Spirit, baptize us with thy sacred influence !

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

Matt. III, ver. 14.



When Jesus stood by Jordans side,
Thus to his Lord the Servant cried,
I need to be baptiz'd of Thee,
And, Master, comest thou to me?



THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

MATT. III. 14. A. D. 30

OUR blessed Lord did not enter upon his public ministry till he was baptized of John. This was indeed a very surprising event,—the Messiah baptized by his forerunner, who was appointed to prepare the way of the Lord. The particulars of this baptism of the Saviour are thus recorded :—

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now : for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water : and lo, the heavens were opened unto him ; and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

For thirty years Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, remained hid, and concealed, as under dark clouds, in Nazareth, a city of Galilee. The time has now come, when this blessed Sun must rise, when Christ's public life and public ministry must begin. Now he must pour upon a benighted world the blessed rays of his mercy, wisdom, and grace. Before this can take place, it was necessary he should be baptized of John. He

knew that John was preaching and baptizing at Jordan, and therefore he goes to John; and for this purpose went from Galilee to Jordan. Jesus might have sent for John to come to him;—but see his humility, he goes from Galilee to John!

How infinitely pleased John was to see Jesus! But his surprise was great in the extreme, when Jesus told him he came to receive baptism at his hand. “John forbade him.” He was overwhelmed at the condescension of Christ, and considered himself altogether unworthy of the honour of baptizing his Lord. In expressing his surprise, he says, “I have need to be baptized of thee.” As if he had said, “I only baptize with water, but thou hast come to baptize with the Holy Ghost, as with fire;—and that is the baptism which I need at thy hand, and which thou alone art able to bestow.” Jesus kindly overruled the objection, by telling John that the baptism was necessary for fulfilling all righteousness. Jesus, in submitting to the ceremonies of Moses, fulfilled the righteousness of that dispensation. By submitting to be baptized of John, he fulfilled the righteousness of his dispensation. Thus he gave his public testimony to the truth and divine origin of the dispensation of John.

O what glorious marks of Divine approbation attended the baptism of Jesus! The heavens were opened, and poured down a stream of glorious light. The Spirit descended on Jesus, in the form of a dove; and the Father declares him to be his “beloved Son.”

CHRIST TEMPTED IN THE WILDERNESS.
Mat. IV, ver. 1.



In the Desert's barred ways,
Forty nights and forty days,
Was the everlasting Son
Tempted of the evil one.

CHRIST TEMPTED IN THE WILDER- NESS.

MATT. IV. 1—11. A.D. 30.

JESUS cannot enter upon his public ministry until he is baptized of John—and, wonderful to tell, until he is tempted of the devil. He received the first, and was baptized of John. He submitted to the second—he *was* tempted of the devil, and he nobly resisted and conquered the foe. In this temptation we see that the labours and sufferings of Christ began at the same time. No sooner had he left the company of holy John, than he is led by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. The following is the account of this famous duel, that was fought betwixt Michael and the Dragon,—betwixt the Prince of light, and the prince of darkness,—betwixt the Saviour of souls, and the murderer of souls,—betwixt the King of heaven, and the king of hell:—

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an-hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the

holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down," &c.

It was necessary that Jesus, the Captain of salvation, should be made perfect through sufferings. Without this, he could not have been a Saviour. On this account he endured the temptations of Satan, and is therefore able both to pity and to succour them who are tempted

The devil tried him with the following temptations : —First, he tempted him to call in question his sonship or relation to the Father ; he said, "*If* thou be Son of God." Secondly, he placed before him the temptation of presumption ; namely, to make bread out of stones : "If thou be the son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Thirdly, he presented before him the temptation of self-murder : "He setteth him on the pinnacle of the temple, and saith to him, Cast thyself down." Fourthly, he presents before him the temptation of worshipping himself,—the devil : he promised him all the kingdoms of the earth, and their glory, if he would only fall down and worship him. O what daring, what presumptuous iniquity !

It is very surprising that Satan employed *parts* of passages of Scripture to give his temptations the greater power. Our Saviour resists all his temptations by passages of Scripture. Satan could not stand such powerful artillery. "Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

CHRIST INSTRUCTING NICODEMUS .

John III, ver. 2 .



Mark the Rulers strong surprise ,
While the Lord , in language plain ,
Tells him , would he reach the skies ,
He must needs be born again .



CHRIST INSTRUCTING NICODEMUS.

JOHN III. 2, &c. A. D. 30.

NICODEMUS, in the Jewish church, was a Pharisee, and a ruler among the people. By the providence of God he was brought under the preaching of our Lord. A serious impression was produced upon his heart. On this account he formed an high opinion of Christ, and became one of his followers. Grace entered his mind ; but it was in so small a degree, that for some considerable time, he was actually ashamed to confess Christ, or publicly to acknowledge that he loved him. However, before he died, both his fears and his shame fled. Yes—even before Pilate, he nobly declared he was not ashamed of that Jesus, who was not ashamed to die upon the cross for him.

A short time after Nicodemus was seriously impressed with divine things, he came by night to our Saviour, to receive more information on the great things of God. He had some light, but he wished more. He learned some important lessons, but he longed and thirsted for more information. He knew he could receive what he wanted from none but Jesus, and to Jesus he went. May God the Spirit give us the same desire, and mercifully lead us to the same Divine Teacher ! When Nicodemus came to Jesus, he at once acknowledged he was a teacher sent from God.

As a proof of this acknowledgment, he mentioned the miracles which our Saviour wrought. On this occasion, Jesus taught him the following important lesson,—“That unless he was born again, and experienced a converting change, he could not enter the kingdom of God.” That is, he could neither enter the church of God on earth, nor be admitted into the kingdom of God in heaven. Important truth! Young readers, pray earnestly to God the Spirit, that you may feel its great, its solemn importance! Nicodemus was so ignorant of the *new birth*, and of the Old Testament Scriptures which speak of it, that he imagined our Saviour spake of the body being born again, and not of the change the soul required. Jesus told him it was surprising that a *teacher* of Israel was so ignorant of these things. Nicodemus felt his ignorance, and therefore was the better prepared to receive the kind instruction of the Divine Teacher. Jesus further told him, that the new birth was a change of soul, that could only take place by the power of the Holy Ghost. Then he led him on to see, that as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent on a pole in the wilderness, for healing the stung and dying Israelites, so he, the Son of Man, must be lifted up on a cross, to die for the salvation of a diseased, wretched, and ruined world.

· Blessed are they who are taught such lessons!

PETER AND ANDREW CALLED TO BE DISCIPLES.

Mark I. ver 17

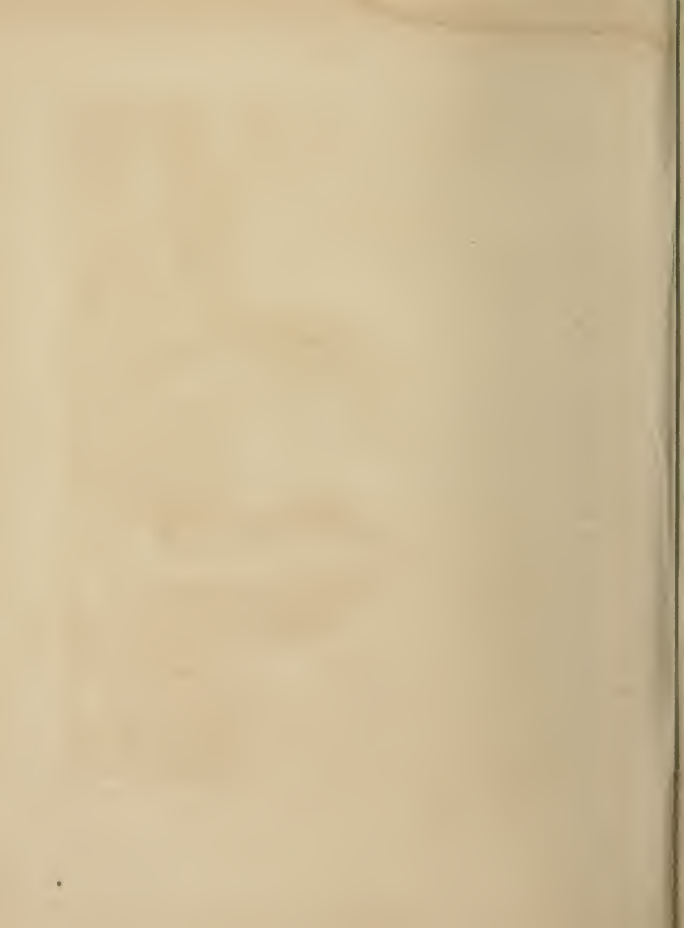


Jesus meekly passing by

Thus proclaims his loving mind,

"Come ye after me, and I

Will make you fishers of Mankind."



PETER AND ANDREW CALLED TO BE DISCIPLES.

MARK I. 17. A. D. 30.

ONE remarkable event at the commencement of our Saviour's public ministry was the calling of men to be his disciples. The word *disciple* signifies learner, or scholar. Those men who were called by way of eminence disciples, were more than disciples. They were called and appointed to be the teachers of others. They must be scholars or disciples, before they can be teachers and apostles.

Christ's ministry was fully commenced, when John was put into prison. As the forerunner retires, the Lord appears. As John's star sets, the Sun of Righteousness begins to shine. "Now after that John was put into prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: (for they were fishers.) And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him."

Jesus could have instructed the world by his own power, without any instruments. He in himself needs no assistance. In his sovereignty and condescension he is pleased to employ men for the instruction of men, and for the salvation of men. And when he began

his ministry on earth, what men did our Saviour choose? where did he apply for suitable individuals? Did he go to the Sanhedrim, the learned council of seventy? No. Did he apply to the learned Jewish Rabbis? No. Did he apply to those who held the highest offices in the Jewish church? No. Did he apply to the schools of philosophers, to obtain the most learned and eloquent among them, for this great and noble cause? No. Human nature, and human wisdom would have thought it wise, to have obtained men from these sources. Human wisdom would have considered, that the most learned men were the likeliest to be successful in making known, in promoting, and in establishing the christian faith. And what does Jesus do? He goes at once to the side of the sea of Galilee, and calls a few poor, ragged, ignorant fishermen. He calls his disciples and apostles from the most mean and illiterate of men. He did so, that no man might glory in man. He does so, that the excellency of the power might appear to be of God, and not of man. He does so, to confound the pride and ambition of men.

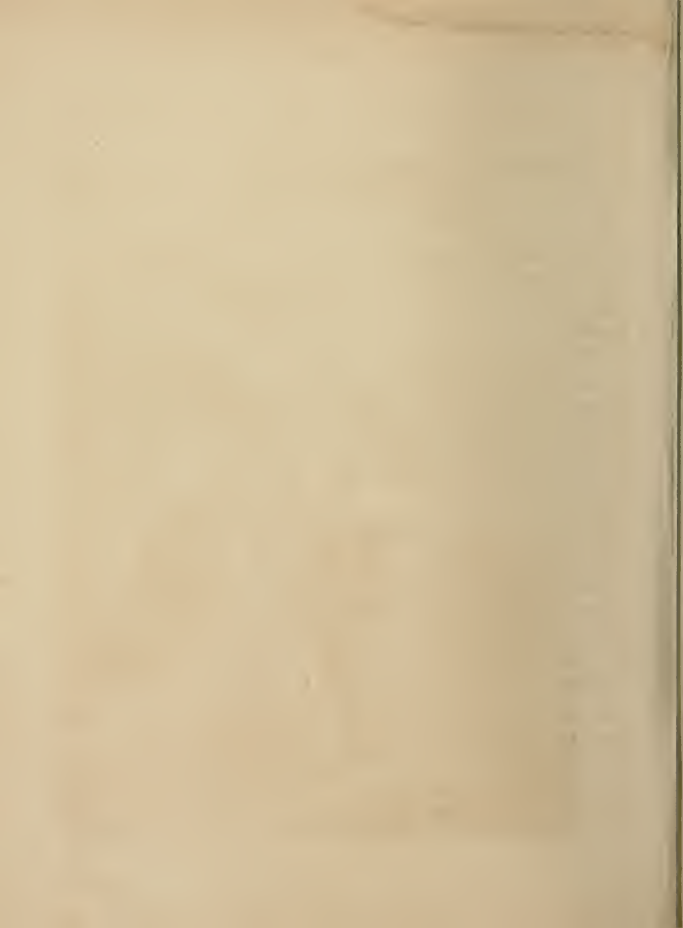
No sooner does Jesus call Simon and Andrew, than they obeyed. He said to them, *Follow me*. The word was accompanied with power,—yes, with almighty power. It reached their hearts. They left all and followed him. They left their boats, and their nets, to become fishers of men.

Holy Spirit, make us followers of Christ !

CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA ,
John IV. ver 7



He who takes of mortal Men
Earthly water thirsts again,
But of Jesu's living store,
He who drinks shall thirst no more !



CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

JOHN IV. 7. A. D. 30.

SAMARIA was that part of the Holy Land which was situated betwixt Judea and Galilee. There dwelt originally the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Issachar.

According to the predictions of the prophets, the inhabitants of Samaria forming a part of the ten tribes were carried away captive by the king of Assyria. Heathen colonies were transplanted by the conquering king, and put in their place, who married with the poor Jews who were left behind. The Samaritans, therefore, in blood and religion, were mongrel Jews. They worshipped the God of Israel only. They erected to his honour a temple on Mount Gerizzim, in opposition to the temple which was built in Jerusalem. Great enmity existed between them and the Jews, so that the two people had no dealings together. The worst name which could be given to any one, in the estimation of the Jews, was to call him a *Samaritan*. Hence the Jews said of Jesus, in the enmity of their hearts, "Thou art a *Samaritan*, and hast a devil."

Our blessed Lord, in his holy career of active benevolence, when on a certain occasion he left Judea, for the purpose of visiting Galilee, found it necessary in his way to go through Samaria. What made it

necessary? There was a wretched woman, living in a city of Samaria, called Sychar, whom he was determined to convert by his grace. She was a harlot. She had lived long in infamy and sin; and surely no life can be so disgraceful or so miserable. Blessed be God, that the holy Jesus does not overlook the vilest, the most guilty, or the most degraded of sinners! He came to seek and to save the lost.

Our Lord, accompanied by his disciples, came near to a city of Samaria, called Sychar. This city was also called Sychem, and Shechem. It received its name from Shechem, the son of Hamor, who brought disgrace on Dinah, the daughter of Jacob. Near this place Jacob bought a piece of ground. This he left to his son Joseph, who after a very long period of time, was buried in it. Here there was a well, called Jacob's well. Jesus being wearied with his journey, sat down to rest on the side of the well. His disciples went to the city, to buy bread. In the mean time, the woman of Samaria came to the well, to fetch water. "Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink." The woman was surprised that a Jew should have asked drink from one who was a Samaritan. Jesus began to speak to her about the *water of life*. He showed that he was acquainted with all her past and infamous life. He made himself known to her as *the Christ*. He regenerated her soul. He filled her with his Spirit. He arrayed her in the garments of salvation. Her conversion was followed by the conversion of a great multitude, in the city of Sychar.



CHRIST'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT,
Matt V ver 2



Blessed are the poor and meek,
Blessed they who humbly seek,
Heavenly grace, for they shall see
God through all Eternity. \

CHRIST'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

MATT. V. 2. A. D. 30.

ONE of the first sermons our blessed Lord delivered, is commonly called, *The Sermon on the Mount*. How great the condescension of the Lord our God! He came from heaven to earth, in the person of the Son, clothed in our nature, and became an instructor and a preacher. He was the Prince of preachers, the great Prophet of the church, the Light of the world. No man ever taught as he taught; no man ever spake as he spake; and no man ever preached as he preached. Wonderful preachers went before Christ, such as Enoch, and Noah, and Moses, and Ezra, and Isaiah, and John the Baptist. But Jesus excelled them all. No wonder, for he taught them all. They all spake as they were moved and taught by his Spirit.

The *place* is very particularly mentioned, where Christ taught. It was a mountain. The mountain was not situated near Jerusalem, but in Galilee. The Scribes and Pharisees sat at their ease, in the chair of Moses. See how indifferently our Lord was accommodated on earth. Does he wish to sleep? He has not where to lay his head. Does he wish to preach? He must go from desert to desert, and from mountain to mountain. Still we have in this an important lesson; namely, that all places under the gospel are equally sacred, and that the tidings of salvation may be

proclaimed in every place which is decent and convenient. The sermon which our Saviour delivered on the mount, was intentionally an exposition of the law, which was delivered upon a mountain. It was also proper that the christian law, as well as the law of Moses, should be delivered on a mountain. How amazing the difference ! When the law of Moses was delivered on a mountain, it was accompanied with thunder and lightning. Now the Christian law is uttered in a still, sweet, gentle voice. When the law of Moses was delivered, the people were not allowed to come near the mountain. Now the people are congregated upon the mountain, to hear the voice of love and mercy.

When the law was given, only Moses was admitted into the presence of the Lawgiver. When the christian law is given, all the people are admitted into the presence of Jesus, who is Immanuel, God with us. In the first case, the people were overwhelmed with fear—in the second, they are allured,—they are drawn with love.

The *hearers* of this remarkable sermon were the disciples of Christ. It was not merely his twelve disciples, but a large number who were very partial to our Saviour's ministry, and who wished to learn wisdom and knowledge from his lips.

Holy Spirit, grant that all the youthful readers of these pages may become the disciples of Christ. May they love his holy doctrine, gospel, and laws. May they sit at his feet, and learn of him who is meek, and lowly in heart. Amen !

THE POOL OF BETHSAIDA,
John iv. 7.



At the Pool the lame and blind,
Waiting for its moving tide,
But relief at once they find,
When the Saviour passes by.



POOL OF BETHESDA.

JOHN V. 2. A. D. 30.

BETHESDA was a pool on the east of Jerusalem. The name is a Hebrew word, and signifies *the house of mercy*. This name was probably given to it, because a public bath was erected on the spot, and also because an angel occasionally was sent of God to trouble the waters, and at the same time to communicate to them a healing virtue. Historians inform us, that these remarkable visits only took place a few years before Christ, the great Healer and Physician, appeared in the flesh. Was not this a lively intimation of the approach of ONE, who would mercifully impart his healing virtue to diseased souls?

As to the fitting up of the buildings which surrounded the pool, we are informed that there were five porches, in which the sick lay. Here we have the charity of men uniting with the mercy of God. Blessed union! There is no sight more pleasing, when visiting great cities, than those buildings which are erected by the hand of christian charity, for the relief of the diseased, the indigent, the orphan, and the afflicted.

Great numbers frequented this pool of healing,—this house of mercy. Wherever we go, we find there are numerous afflictions, and many afflicted. How loudly

does this proclaim that we are a degenerate race, and that we are living in a sinful world ! Where there is a sinful atmosphere, those who breathe it must be the subjects of many afflictions. Very affecting it must have been, to have witnessed the various descriptions of impotent persons, lying in the porches, and waiting for the moving of the waters. There lay and waited the blind, the halt, and the withered. This is an emblem of the spiritual diseases of the souls of men. Happy are they who wait in the porches of gospel ordinances, for Christ's gracious healing visits !

The waters of the pool of Bethesda did not always possess healing virtue. It was *only* when the angel descended, and troubled the waters. It is *only* when the Spirit of Christ accompanies the ordinances of religion, that they become instrumental in healing diseased souls. It was a peculiarity about this pool, that none were healed except the man or woman who entered first into it, after the angel troubled the waters. O what mercy—at all times Christ is willing to dispense the healing virtue of his grace !

Our Saviour visited the pool, and saw a very afflicted man, who particularly excited his compassion. The man had been afflicted thirty-eight years. He lay a very long time at the side of the pool, but never succeeded in getting first into the waters. His case really seemed hopeless. Our Saviour entered into conversation with him. He said to him, " Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." Instantly he was made whole. Merciful Jesus, heal our diseased souls ! Amen.

CLEANSING A LEPER.

Mark I, ver. 41.



Moved with compassion, on the leper's head,
The Saviour gently laid his healing hand;
"I will — be clean" the Man of sorrows said,
And straight the sickness fled at his command.



CLEANSING A LEPER.

MARK I. 41. A. D. 31.

THERE is unspeakable pleasure to be derived from a careful attention to the miracles of Christ. His miracles prove that he was God as well as man; and they prove he was the real Messiah. Consider the happiness which our blessed Lord's miracles conferred on those who were the objects of his mercy. O what must the man have felt, who was long blind, and who was restored to sight! What must the man have felt when the devils, who long tormented him, were expelled from his bosom! O what must the leper have felt, when the kind Saviour commanded the foul malady to depart, and made his flesh pure as the flesh and clean as the skin of a child!

St. Mark gives us a very interesting account of a miraculous cure, which our tender-hearted Saviour performed upon the body of a man, who was covered with leprosy. "And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me whole. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will, be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed."

Consider the grievous situation of this poor and afflicted man. He was *a leper*. The leprosy among the

Jews was the most distressing and disgusting of all bodily diseases. It was particularly considered unclean. It made the countenance appear horrible to the view. At the same time, it was very infectious ; so much so, that it infected garments, and even furniture, and the walls of houses. No medicine could cure it ; and it was only healed by a miracle. What rendered this disease still more dreadful, was this:—a leper was obliged to live *alone*, in a house standing by itself, at a proper distance from other houses. He was not allowed to go into any company. When he walked out, he was obliged to walk by himself, with his head covered. If he saw any one coming near him, the Jewish law compelled him to cry aloud, Unclean, unclean ! that the person approaching might keep at a sufficient distance from him, to be beyond the reach of his infection.

When we think of these things, we may form some idea of the greatness of our Saviour's kindness, in performing the miracle upon the afflicted leper, by making him quite whole.

O how earnestly the leper cried to Jesus to deliver him from the loathsome disease ! May we be as earnest in crying to Jesus, to deliver us from the disease and leprosy of sin ! O Jesus, wash us in thy blood ! See how readily Jesus answered his prayer. Jesus was moved with compassion, and healed him. Lord Jesus, extend to us thy saving compassion ! Amen.

THE MIRACULOUS DRAGGNET OF FISHES,

John T. 177. 8



Lo! the Disciple who at Christ's command,
Had cast the net with faith's unshrinking hand,
Cries out, astonished at his great reward,
"Depart for I'm a sinful Man, Oh Lord!"



THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES.

LUKE V. 8. A. D. 31.

WHEREVER our Saviour journeyed, he found a pulpit from which to preach. At one time we find him in the wilderness,—at another time, on a mountain,—at another time, by the side of Jacob's well,—and then in a fishing-boat, from which he proclaimed salvation and mercy to a large assembly on the sea shore, who met together to learn wisdom from his lips.

On the lake of Gennesaret our Saviour entered into a small boat, belonging to Peter, and graciously preached to the multitudes on the shore. When the sermon was finished, he desired Peter to launch out into the deep. The fishing-net was beside them, in the little ship. Jesus told Peter to let down the net for a draught of fishes. Spiritually considered, when ministers proclaim the gospel, they let down the net for a draught of fishes. When this is done at Christ's command, and in the way he requires, we have reason to expect a successful draught.

Peter does not refuse to let down the net, but mentions their unsuccessful labours during the preceding night. He said, "We have toiled all night, and have taken nothing." Having had no success when his Saviour was absent, he hopes that now his Saviour is present, the net shall not be let down in vain. Therefore, at Christ's word, he let down he net. When parents, and teachers, and ministers, let

down the net of instruction at Christ's blessed command, they may indeed depend upon him for the blessing. Peter let down the net *in hope*. Let parents, and teachers, and ministers let down the net of gospel instruction in hope, and they will assuredly find that their hope will not make ashamed. Almost as soon as Peter let down the net, a large multitude of fishes was enclosed. So great was the number, that the net sustained some injury,—part of it brake. However, the net was not so injured as to lose the fishes. Peter required assistance. He therefore asked his friends to come and assist him. They came, and filled the two ships to such a degree, that they began to sink.

Such a miracle could not fail to produce a very deep impression on the minds of those who saw it. They were all astonished. Christ's name is *Wonderful*, and all his works are works of wonder. This was a work of wonderful power, and of wonderful goodness. Blessed are they who readily, and faithfully, and constantly serve Jesus. He is the kindest and the best of masters. They are blessed *in* his service, and at the same time Jesus enriches them with gracious rewards.

Christ's goodness produced on the mind of Peter the effect of the deepest humility and self-abasement. He said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" In one moment the great and unexpected goodness of Christ presented before him an affecting view of his sinfulness and guilt. He considered himself infinitely unworthy of the favour and fellowship of a Saviour so kind and so great.

HEALING THE PALSY.

Luke V ver 19.



With matchless mercy, and unequall'd skill
While Scribes and Pharisees impatient view;
To shew his power, and all their murmurs still,
The Lord of life gives health and pardon too.

HEALING THE PALSY.

LUKE V. 19. A. D. 31.

OUR Saviour when on earth cured many who were afflicted with the palsy. This is a very distressing disease. A partial palsy is, when a person loses a part of his bodily motion, and a part of his bodily feeling. In many instances there are individuals who lose the power of one half of their bodies ; and there are other instances where the body is deprived of all its power, when it resembles a log of wood, or a mass of cumbrous clay. This is a great calamity ! What is very remarkable, many are struck with palsy in a moment of time. The one moment they are comparatively well, and the other they are helpless as a new-born babe. In some, this complaint is soon followed by death, whilst others linger out their lives for several years in abject weakness and sorrow.

Individuals in this doleful case were often brought to our Saviour, and laid at his feet. There never was an instance of one brought to him for a cure, whom he did not mercifully relieve: those who were afflicted were not more willing to be cured, than our Saviour was to heal them. St. Luke gives the following account of one brought to Jesus in a very remarkable way, who was raised from weakness to strength, in the presence of a multitude of people, who were filled with such

amazement, that they cried out, "We have seen strange things to-day."

"And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy ; and they sought means to bring him in, and lay him before him." O that we were as anxious for the salvation of the souls of our graceless relatives, as the friends of this man were for the healing of his body ! The evangelist goes on to say, "And when they could not find by what way they might bring him because of the multitude, they went upon the house top, and let him down through the tiling with his couch, into the midst, before Jesus." They met with great difficulties, but their perseverance overcame them all. They succeeded in laying their afflicted relative at the feet of the merciful Jesus. Holy Spirit, enable us to lay ourselves, and our graceless relatives, at the feet of Jesus.

When the poor, helpless man was laid at Jesus's feet, he said two things *to* him, and performed two miracles *on* him. He performed a miracle of grace upon his soul, and said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." He performed a miracle of mercy upon his body, and said, "Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." Immediately he rose up before all the people, he took up the couch on which he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

RAISING THE WIDOW'S SON.

Luke VII. ver. 15.



When tears bedew'd the mourning Mother's eyes,
The pitying Saviour made her grief his care,
He touch'd the bier, and bade the dead arise,
The dead arose in living wonder there.



RAISING THE WIDOW'S SON.

LUKE VII. 15. A. D. 31

THE miracle which our Saviour wrought, when he raised the widow's son to life, is one which cannot be thought upon, without feelings of deep and intense interest.

The miracle was performed in a city called *Nain*. Some think that this place was near Endor, and about two miles south of mount Tabor. Others say that it was situated near the foot of mount Hermon. What renders this place at all worthy of notice, is this, that here our Saviour performed the far-famed miracle, of raising to life the son of an afflicted widow, when the mourning friends were in the very act of carrying his lifeless body to the grave.

Many were present when the miracle took place. It is said, "Many of his disciples and much people went with him." All these had an opportunity of spreading abroad Christ's fame, and of giving their testimony to his great power, and his great mercy.

Consider the person on whom the miracle was performed. He was a young man, in the very flower of his existence, when death laid upon him his cold hand. O how many young flowers has death cut down! How true, *man comes forth like a flower and is cut down*. O Lord, impress this solemn truth upon the minds of the youthful readers of these pages! This young man

was the son of a widow, and the *only son* of a widow. When her husband died, she hoped that her only son would be spared to be a comfort to her. She fondly hoped, that in some measure, her son would fill up the place of the departed father. O what was her anguish when the hand of death struck her only son, and in one moment blasted all her earthly hopes ! She was much beloved and much pitied ; for when the interment of her son was about to take place, much people of the city accompanied her.

As the funeral procession was passing along the streets with great solemnity, Jesus came at the same time into the city, and met the bereaved mother and friends while they were in the act of conveying the lifeless body of the young man to the grave. When he looked upon the widow, when he saw her grief and the tears of sorrow which gushed down her cheeks, he was filled with compassion. He resolved to convert her sorrow into joy, and to change her tears of grief into tears of gladness and of praise. He went forward to the mother and said unto her, "Weep not." The word reached her heart. This is not all ; he touched *the bier*, namely, that on which the dead body was stretched. Immediately those who carried it stood still. Then our Saviour said to the young man, "Arise !" He instantly arose, and was restored to his mother. Amazing mercy ! Amazing power !



When he whose days on earth in doing good
Were spent, beside the sad and sighing stood,
One gentle touch he gave, and from the bed
Of suffering nature pain and sickness fled !



PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW HEALED.

MATT. VIII. 15. A. D. 31.

THE holy Evangelist, Matthew, employs very few words in giving an account of the merciful miracle the Saviour performed, in the instant cure of Peter's mother-in-law. He says, "And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose and ministered unto them."

In this miracle, our Lord acts up fully to the meaning of his name, *Jesus*. *Jesus* is a name of Hebrew origin, and signifies a Saviour. Though he came from heaven to earth more especially to save the souls of men, yet he often performed miracles of compassion upon the body, by healing the most grievous, and tormenting, and dangerous diseases. Oh, how admirably Isaiah described the character of Jesus, nearly seven hundred years before our Saviour's birth! Isaiah lxi. 1—3. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives; and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion; to give unto them beauty for ashes; the oil of joy for mourning; and the garment of praise for the

spirit of heaviness." We cannot attentively peruse the miracles of our Lord without seeing a rich and astonishing illustration of that most lovely and animating description which the prophet gave of our Saviour's life, so many centuries before he appeared on earth.

It is said, Jesus went into Peter's house. What an honour to have such a visitor! He is the King of kings; the incarnate Jehovah; the Almighty Redeemer. Let us value Christ's fellowship, and seek his presence. Happy are they who invite him into their hearts, and into their abodes! He will accept the invitation. He will make their hearts his *temple*, and their abodes his *Bethel*.

When Jesus entered the house of Peter, he found his mother-in-law in great affliction, and at the very point of death. She was laid in her bed sick of a fever! Thus the Saviour found her *when* he entered the house; but he knew her afflicted situation *before* he entered. Indeed, he went on purpose to command the fever to depart. His errand to that house was an errand of mercy. As soon as he went into the house, he advanced to the bed-side of the aged woman, and touched her. Immediately the fever left her. It did not gradually leave her; and even that would have been an unspeakable mercy;—but it left her at once. As an evidence the cure was complete, she rose up and ministered unto them. "Lord Jesus, mercifully come and heal the diseases of our souls."—Amen.

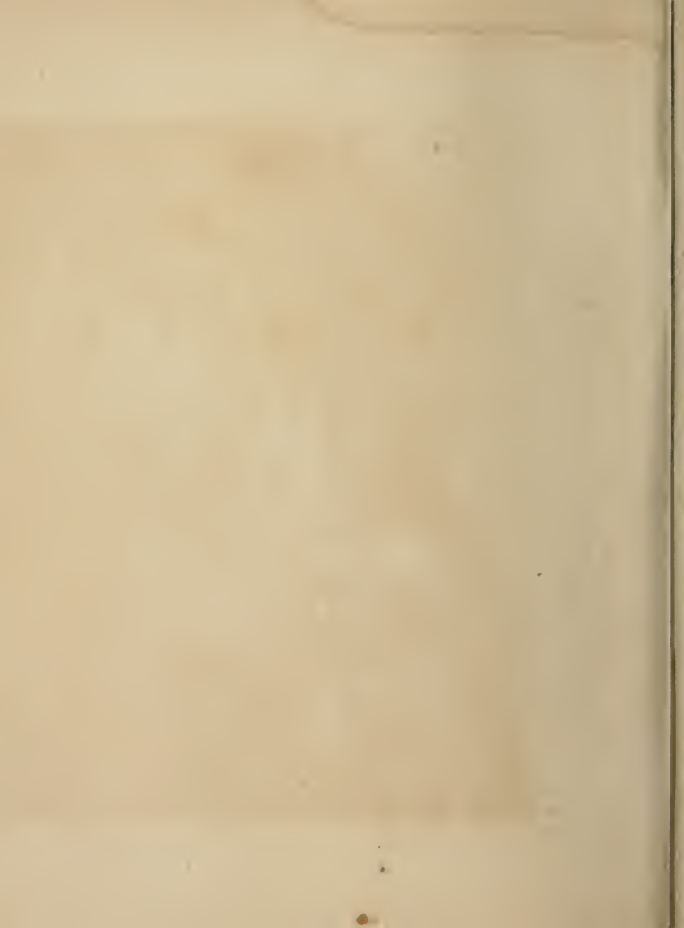


Amid the raging of the fearful storm

The Saviour rests in sleep his peaceful form;

His fearful followers toss'd and trembling cry,

"Save Lord we perish" in their agony!



THE STORM.

MARK IV. 38. A. D. 31.

THE holy Evangelist gives us an account of a remarkable *storm* which our Saviour miraculously converted into a calm. The narrative furnishes a just, literal, and striking illustration of the following lines of the celebrated and much afflicted Cowper:—

“ God moves in a mysterious way,
 His wonders to perform;
 He plants his footsteps in the sea,
 And rides upon the storm.
 Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
 The clouds ye so much dread
 Are big with mercy, and shall break
 With blessings on your head.”

After a day of great activity, labour, and fatigue, Jesus said unto his disciples, “ Let us pass over unto the other side ;” that is, on the other side of a lake formed by the widening of the river Jordan, and commonly called the sea of Galilee, because Galilee was situated along its shores. Jesus went constantly about doing good. He had work to do on one side of the lake, and he did it: and he had work to do on the other side of the lake, and therefore says to his disciples, “ Let us pass over unto the other side.” Agreeably to our Saviour’s desire, they took him into a little ship. “ And there arose a great storm of wind, and

the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow." Though this vessel is called a ship, it was only a small fishing boat, and open, without a deck. For this reason, when the waves rose high, and became tempestuous, they broke over the little boat, and all the disciples could do, they were unable to prevent it from being rapidly filled with water. It continued filling and filling, till at last it began to sink. To human appearance, they were all, certainly, on the very brink of perishing. There was One on board who was able to save them; but he was fast asleep. The tempest raged; yet the raging tempest did not awake the Saviour from his slumbers. The waves dashed upon the little boat with awful violence; and still the Saviour slept as sweetly, and soundly, in the hinder part of the ship, as the babe sleeps in its cradle under the affectionate care of a kind and tender-hearted mother.

The disciples, surprised that their Lord should remain asleep in the midst of so dangerous a storm, and convinced that there was no time to delay, awoke him, and said, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" He heard their prayer: indeed, he waited for their application. He awoke, and arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, "Peace, be still." O what majesty! O what power! The mighty Creator, clothed with human flesh, and addressing, and commanding, and controlling the elements his own hand had formed! "And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."

CHRIST STILLETH THE STORM.

Matt. VIII, ver. 26.



The tempest is hush'd at the Saviour's voice ,
And the Seamen astonish'd with fear rejoice ;
"What manner of Man is this ?- they say ,
"Who commands, and the wind and the sea obey"!



CHRIST STILLETH THE STORM.

MATT. VIII. 26. A. D. 31.

BOTH Matthew and Mark give an account of the same storm, and of the miracle Jesus performed in changing the storm into a calm. Now, we are more particularly to consider the *stilling* of the storm by the word of Christ's power.

First observe, that the disciples earnestly prayed to Christ to save them from the great danger to which they were exposed. They knew he could save them, and he was near to them. Their prayer was short: "Lord, save us, we perish!" As if they had said, 'None can save us, O Jesus, but thyself; and if thy kind and powerful hand be not stretched out for our help, we must be lost, yea, irrecoverably lost: "Lord, save us, we perish."' "

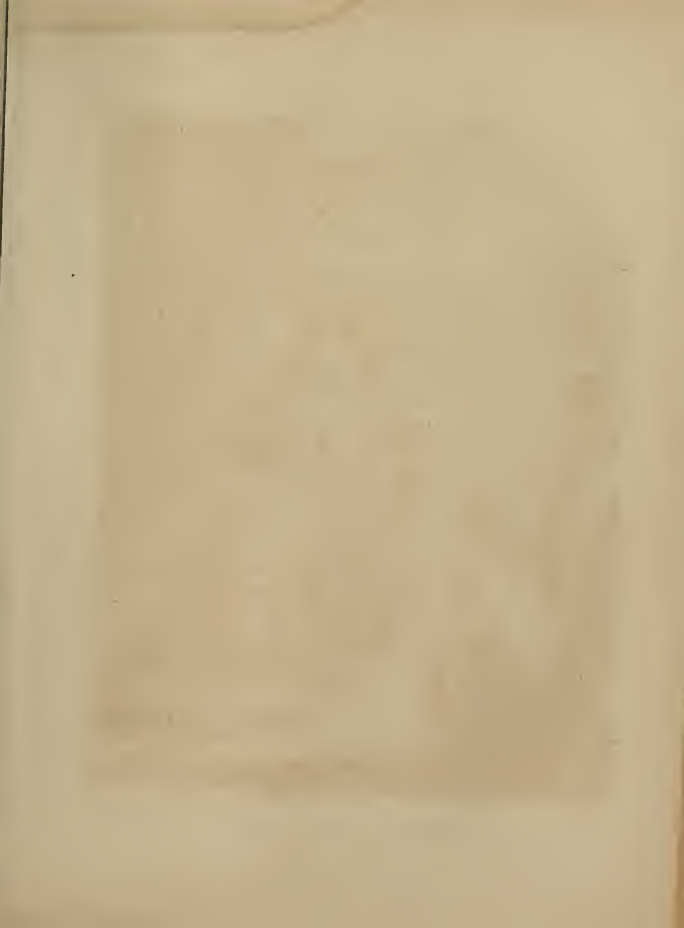
Young readers! if you are not converted by redeeming grace, you are in danger of perishing in the sea of divine wrath. Christ alone can save you from perishing. Have you asked him to save you? If you have not yet, will you ask him? Seek and implore the Spirit to enable you to ask him. O ask him now; delay not. Say to him with earnestness of heart, "Lord, save us, we perish!"

Before Christ answered the prayer of the disciples, he kindly and seasonably reproved them. They needed reproof, and he mercifully administered it. "And he

said unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith !” Their fear was in a great measure slavish. It reached to downright terror, and very nearly approached to despair. Their excessive fear was sinful, because their Saviour was near, and both able and willing to deliver them out of all their troubles.

As soon as our Saviour had finished his seasonable reproof, he commanded the storm to cease. He spake to the winds, and he commanded the waves. He spake to them as if they knew his voice, and he commanded them as his willing and obedient servants. “He rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm.” His word was a word of power, and of Almighty power. The winds could not withstand his word, and the tempestuous waves could not resist his authority. “There was a great calm.” It was not an ordinary calm ; it was a great calm ; it took place suddenly. As soon as the mighty Jesus uttered his command, the sea and the winds obeyed ; it was therefore a *great* calm. And it was a universal calm, extending over the whole lake.

Of course, the disciples were much astonished. They gave utterance to their astonishment in the following words :—“But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him ?” And so they might be astonished, both at the power and the mercy of Jesus. May we be made the objects of his mercy, and we shall be astonished for ever !



TOUCHING THE HEM OF CHRIST'S GARMENT.

Mark V, ver. 28.



Humble faith will from its Lord
Ever gain a high reward ;
So she found who long endur'd —
Touch'd his garment - and was cur'd !

TOUCHING THE HEM OF CHRIST'S GARMENT.

MARK V. 28. A. D. 31.

JAIRUS, one of the rulers of the synagogue, earnestly entreated our Saviour to heal his beloved daughter, who was at the point of death. Jesus went with him, followed by a great multitude of people. On his way to the house of Jairus, he performed a very merciful and remarkable miracle on a poor woman who had been long and greatly afflicted. May God the Spirit bless our consideration of the various particulars connected with this interesting miracle !

Her disease is mentioned—*an issue of blood*. That is, a flowing of blood. It is not unlikely it was a *cancer*, accompanied with a flowing of blood ; if so, it was one of the worst of diseases. This complaint of the poor woman was the more grievous, because the blood, the very vital fluid, the great agent which supports life, was gradually wasting away.

The complaint had been of long standing,—twelve years ! At the beginning it must have been very gradual in its progress. But as the complaint continued so long, the hopes of her recovery diminished. As the complaint grew stronger, the hopes of recovery became weaker. So it is with the disease of sin : the longer it continues, the less hope of recovery. O ye young, apply to Christ the physician *now*. *Now* is the day of salvation.

This afflicted woman did all she could to obtain a cure. She applied to earthly physicians. She fondly

hoped they would be the means of her recovery from a loathsome and wasting disease. These men had tried many experiments upon her, and had occasioned her great suffering. Indeed, she was so persevering and earnest in her attendance and applications, that she spent upon them all her substance. In seeking to be delivered from the affliction of disease, she brought upon herself the affliction of poverty. At last she spent *her all*, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. As it respected human aid and human skill, her hopes were blasted. She had now nothing before her but to drag out a little longer a very miserable existence, and then sink into the grave!

In this sad situation, she heard of Jesus. A beam of hope began to shine upon her afflicted soul. She heard that Jesus was near. Providentially, Jesus passed the very place where she was. She cried, no doubt, to God for help, and resolved to make a strong, and likely a *last* effort for the recovery of her long lost health.

She came in the press behind Jesus, and touched the *hem* of his garment. She believed that if she might only *touch* but his clothes, she should be made whole. She touched him. O what a *touch*! It was the touch of hope,—it was the touch of faith. Jesus gave her the faith, Jesus inclined her, Jesus enabled her to touch. Was she healed? Yes. The very moment she touched the hem of the garment, *virtue* flowed from Jesus into her wound, and she was instantly healed. “O Jesus, heal our diseased souls!”—Amen.

THE HEAD OF JOHN THE BAPTIST BROUGHT
IN A CHARGER.

Mark VI. ver. 28.



The victim of a Woman's hate,
At a relenting Tyrant's breath,
While cruel guards around him wait,
The Baptist bows his head to death!



THE HEAD OF JOHN THE BAPTIST BROUGHT IN A CHARGER.

MARK VI. 28. A.D. 32.

JOHN the Baptist, one of the greatest, and best, and most honoured of men, was cruelly put to death ! His murder was one of the basest and most atrocious that was ever committed, even by the vilest of men.

During the time John preached as the forerunner of Jesus, Herod was tetrarch, or king of Galilee, under the Roman imperial government. This is not the same Herod who reigned at the time of our Saviour's birth. He died when the infant Jesus, with Mary and Joseph, abode in Egypt. But this was the same Herod who reigned when our Saviour died on Calvary's cross,—the same Herod before whom our Lord appeared when this monster of iniquity commanded him to be arrayed in a gorgeous robe of mock royalty, and to be set at nought.

Such was the fame of John the Baptist throughout the whole land, that Herod was influenced by curiosity, and felt a great desire to listen to his remarkable eloquence. He gratified his wish. He went and heard him. The sermons produced a considerable effect upon his mind, though long hardened in sin. So much was he impressed, that he feared, that is venerated and respected, John. He felt convinced that he was a just and an holy man. He observed him, and paid particular attention to him, as a teacher sent of God, and appointed by Heaven. Some change appeared in the outward conduct of the king, and hopes were entertained of

his conversion, for he actually "did many things" under the awakening influence of John's preaching, and heard him gladly. The murder of John was a sad evidence that no work of grace had commenced, and that all his impressions were like the morning cloud and the early dew, which soon passed away.

In one of his sermons, John told Herod to his face, that he was living in incest and adultery, because he had married his brother Philip's wife, in opposition to the laws of God and man. Both Herod, and Herodias, Philip's wife, were filled with indignation. They could not bear to be opposed, or even disturbed in the enjoyment of the unlawful pleasures of their adulterous intercourse. Herod cast John into prison, determined to be no longer exposed by the faithful preaching of that faithful messenger. Herodias wished to proceed to greater lengths. She resolved, if possible, to put John to death. Vile adulteress!

However, a fatal day arrived, when she fulfilled her purpose, and gratified her revenge. During a great festival in honour of Herod's birth-day, the daughter of Herodias came in and danced and pleased the king. Foolish, wicked man! he made an oath, and said, that whatever she would ask he would give it her, even unto the half of the kingdom. Instructed by her mother, she demanded *the head of John the Baptist*, and that it should be placed before her in a charger. The king was sorry, yet for the sake of his oath he gave orders. John was beheaded in prison, and *his head* brought in a charger, and presented to the damsel and her mother.

BEREAL, OR, JOHN THE BAPTIST,
Mark 17 ver. 20



When John's Disciples heard that he was slain,
They stir'd no strife, they breath'd no curses vain;
But while their hearts were fill'd with silent gloom,
Took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb;

BURIAL OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

MARK VI. 29. A.D. 32.

THE Evangelist St. Mark gives the following account of the burial of John the Baptist: "And when his disciples heard of it," that is, of his cruel murder in the prison, "they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb." St. Matthew says, (ch. xiv. 12,) "And his disciples came and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus."

John's disciples were warmly attached to him, as their wise, and holy, and affectionate instructor. They greatly enjoyed his fellowship, greatly admired his graces, and held his faithful sermons in the highest estimation. We are unable to conceive the pungency of their grief, when he was barbarously cast into prison at the instigation of a vile adulteress. It is likely, however, that they had the pleasure of visiting him in his confinement, and of uniting with him in those devotional services, which were preparatory to the glory and felicity of heaven. Probably they enjoyed, even in the gloomy prison, the sweet and delicious foretastes of the joys of the celestial paradise. Young friends! believe it, the dungeons of martyrs have often been the very antechambers of the palace of the heavenly city.

Herodias could not rest satisfied while John was alive. She succeeded in accomplishing his murder. Indeed, the chief guilt of the murder of that great saint and messenger of God, lighted on *her* head.

Soon the tidings of his cruel death spread abroad, and could not long be confined within the limits of the prison, or within the walls of the palace. Soon, the news of the tragical murder of one of the best of men, reached the ears of his disciples. While he lived, they cherished some hope that he might be set at liberty. They fondly expected, and earnestly prayed, that their beloved master might still preach the doctrines of repentance, and both astonish and edify attentive multitudes with his fervent, solemn, and matchless eloquence. How rapidly these affectionate wishes were buried in the dust! They went to the prison, and saw the affecting, the heart-rending sight! They saw his mutilated body,—his lifeless corpse! They now found, that the short career of the forerunner of the Messiah was come to a close. The sun of the messenger who prepared the way of the Lord is now set, and the Sun of righteousness is now rising. How affecting, that the ministry of both was not only closed in death, but by murder!

The disciples took up the body, and committed it to the tomb. They did not put his corpse into the hands of mercenary unfeeling hirelings. They undertook the office themselves, with mourning and loving hearts! They laid a body in the grave embalmed with the love of Christ,—a body which will awake in the morning of the resurrection, clothed with immortal glory. After the interment, they went and told Jesus, who was ready to pour into their wounded hearts the balm of heavenly grace.

JESUS MIRACULOUSLY FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.

MARK VI. 41. A.D. 32.

WE cannot too often observe and admire the mercy which shone in the miracles of Christ. They sprang from the purest benevolence, and conferred happiness on multitudes. Though that happiness was great, it was far exceeded by the enjoyment and delight our Saviour experienced in bestowing such comfort on others. That saying was really verified in our Lord, and in all the miracles he performed—"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

After the burial of John the Baptist, Jesus went into a desert place, with his disciples. They went privately by a small ship. However, the people heard of the direction he took, and they went after him in great multitudes, out of all the neighbouring cities. They followed him to a desert. Blessed desert, where Christ is! His presence can change a dungeon into a palace, the whale's belly into a temple, a desert into a paradise, and the valley and shadow of death into the portico of heaven.

When the Saviour looked upon the vast multitude, he was filled with compassion. He had compassion on their souls, because they were as sheep having no shepherd. Alas! there was no one in the Jewish church who cared for their souls. He therefore

taught them many things. He preached affectionately, and plainly, and for a considerable length of time. We hope many heard to the salvation of their souls. "Blessed is the people who know the joyful sound!" May it be our blessedness to know it, to believe it, to enjoy it, and to live under its influence!

Our Saviour felt compassion for the bodies, as well as for the souls of the assembled multitude. At the close of the day, the disciples requested him to disperse the people, and to go to the various villages to buy bread. Great was their surprise, when he told them to give the people bread to eat. The disciples were poor themselves: how then could they be expected to provide bread for five thousand men, and for nearly as many women and children, amounting in the whole to at least ten thousand persons? Jesus asked how many loaves they had. They said, Five, and two fishes. These were not sufficient to feed them; but they *shall* be fed. Jesus, the BREAD OF LIFE, will feed them, and furnish a splendid display of his power and of his mercy. He made the people sit down in companies, by fifties and by hundreds, upon the grass. He looked up to heaven, and blessed the loaves and the fishes. The loaves and fishes were distributed among the people. They did all eat, and they were all filled. As the loaves of bread passed along the ranks, they did not diminish. They increased as they proceeded. At the conclusion of this miraculous feast, the fragments were more abundant than the bread and fishes at the beginning.



THE BLIND MEN RECEIVING THEIR SIGHT.
Matt. XX. ver. 34.



They alone will Christ deride
Who have sight by nature dim,
They whose Eyes He opens wide
Will be sure to follow Him !

THE BLIND MEN RECEIVING THEIR SIGHT.

MATT. XX. 34. A.D. 33.

WE are now to consider a very notable miracle, namely, Jesus conferring sight upon two blind men. The place and time are mentioned, where, and when the miracle was performed. It was in the vicinity of Jericho. That city was once demolished in the days of Joshua. There was a curse pronounced upon it, if it should ever be rebuilt again. But even in the neighbourhood of this city, the merciful Saviour performed a most notable miracle of kindness, in opening the eyes of two blind men, sitting by the way-side. The whole world, and the whole race of men, were under a curse; but Jesus came to remove the curse—O wonderful love!—by becoming a curse for us!

The miracle was performed in the presence of a great multitude of witnesses. It was not only for the benefit of the men on whom it was performed, but for the profit and advantage of the witnesses, that they might have a glorious proof that Jesus was *the Christ*, and the Saviour of men.

The prayer of the blind men is truly striking. They prayed together. Their case was similar, and their opportunity was similar, and their prayer was similar. Solitary prayer is a great blessing, and social prayer is a great blessing. When two or three are present together in Christ's name, most assuredly HE will be in

the midst of them, to bless them. He has given his promise, *it will* be the case, and his gracious promise *must* be fulfilled.

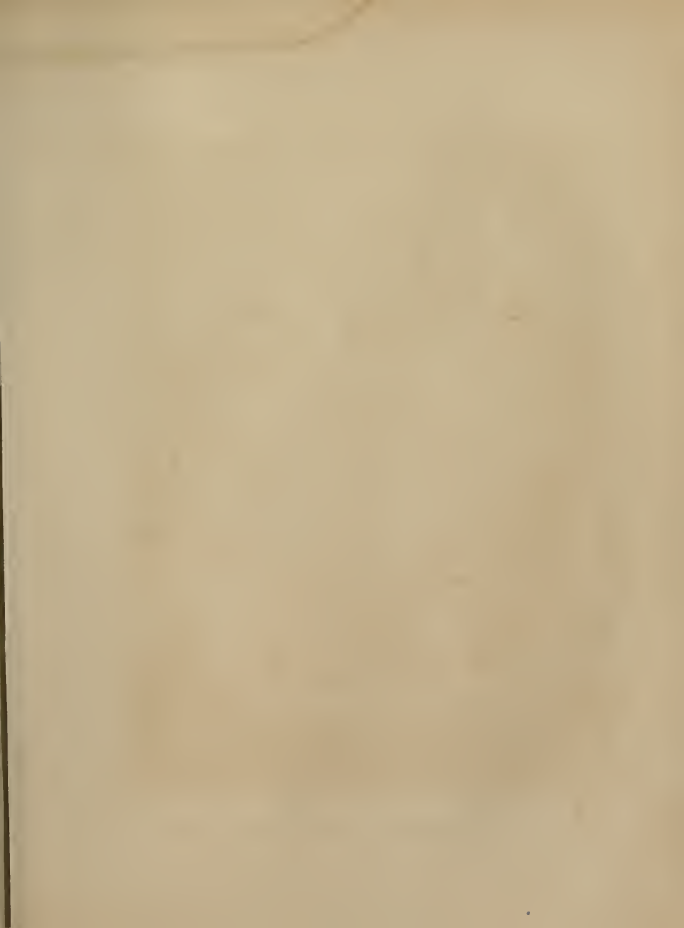
The matter and manner of the blind men's prayer are truly interesting: "Have mercy upon us, O Lord, thou Son of David." In this prayer we have an expression of adoration and reverence. They addressed Jesus as Lord, and as the Messiah. This is intimated by the name and title, "Thou Son of David." This name, among the Jews, was the same as Messiah.

Observe the importunity and earnestness with which they prayed. They felt their wretched case, and that if they allowed the present opportunity to pass away, another opportunity of having their eyes opened might never return. Holy Spirit, teach us, like these blind men, to be importunate in prayer!

These men were interrupted in their prayer. The multitude rebuked them, and called upon them to be silent. This only added to their earnestness: "They cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David."

The merciful Jesus heard and answered their prayer. He taught them to pray, and he answered the prayer he taught them. "He said to them, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him."

Lord Jesus, mercifully open the eyes of our souls!



THE TRANSFIGURATION.

Luke IX, ver 29



Awak'd from sleep by glory's dazzling rays,
The joy'd Disciples on their Master gaze;
And cry, entranc'd with joy and holy fear,
This God for us to be for ever here!

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

LUKE IX. 29. A. D. 32.

THE transfiguration of Christ is one of the most remarkable events of our Saviour's life here below. He came to our world to be humbled and degraded, in a way and form in which no other individual was ever humbled, before or since. As he came for such a purpose, it is natural for us to inquire, For what end was our Saviour transfigured upon the mountain in the presence of his disciples? For what purpose did he exhibit such bright displays of divine and mediatorial glory, more suited to a state of exaltation than to a state of humiliation and suffering? To these questions the following answers may be given. He was transfigured to give his disciples a specimen of that glory in which he would appear at the last day, and as the judge of assembled worlds. He did so, that his disciples might be encouraged both to serve him and to suffer for him. He did so, that they might form some idea of that glory they should behold, and enjoy, through the endless ages of eternity.

Peter, John, and James were called and privileged to be the witnesses of this extraordinary event. They also were present with him on a very different occasion, namely, in the garden of Gethsemane, when the Saviour's sweat was great drops of blood falling to the ground. In the one case the disciples had a

specimen of the glories of heaven, and in the other of the agonies of hell !

Jesus went up to a mountain with these three disciples to pray. It was while humbling himself in prayer, he was so greatly honoured and exalted by his Father. Prayer is a privilege of the very highest and most honourable description. It is a transforming ordinance. In prayer and fellowship with God, believers see, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image.

While our Saviour prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. The face of Moses shone when he came down from the mountain ; but the face of Jesus shone with far greater glory when transfigured on the mountain. The body and the raiment of our Lord were like a transparency, and the beams of his divinity shone through them with brightness exceeding that of the lightning. Thus, his transfiguration was in reality the divinity shining through the humanity.

Moses and Elias came from heaven on purpose to attend our Lord on this most animating occasion. They brought with them their celestial robes. " There talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias : who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." We cannot conceive the glory of the saints in heaven. So glorious are they, that they are called " glorified saints." Holy Spirit, prepare us to appear with Christ in glory ! Amen.

CHRIST APPOINTING OTHER SEVENTY DISCIPLES.
Luke X. ver. 1.



As Lambs amidst the wolves, I send you forth,
Go preach my Gospel, and proclaim its worth;
And heal the sick, and to the People cry,
To you the heavenly Kingdom is come nigh!

CHRIST APPOINTING OTHER SEVENTY DISCIPLES.

LUKE X. 1. A.D. 32.

TWELVE disciples were not a sufficient number to proclaim the glorious gospel throughout Judea and Galilee. Our Saviour, therefore, in his wisdom, added seventy more, making in the whole eighty-two. How small this number, compared with those who are now employed as ministers of truth in various parts of the earth! Still we have reason to say, and lament while we say it, "The harvest is great, but the labourers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest to send more labourers into his harvest." We want whole armies of ministers, to go up and encompass the land.

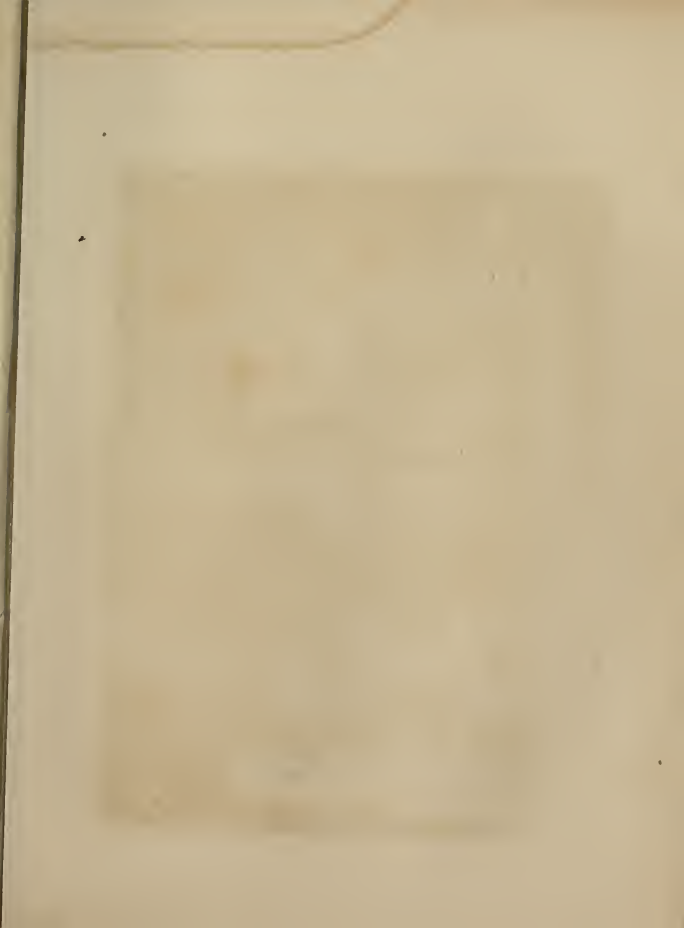
Jesus gave to the seventy disciples an ample commission to preach the gospel, and to confirm it by miracles. He gave them full instruction how they were to conduct themselves in a work so new, so important, and so difficult. As a kind and gracious Master, he gives them a variety of encouragements to animate and cheer them in their blessed employment.

The number was *seventy*. In the choice of the twelve apostles, our Lord had a reference to the twelve tribes of Israel; so in the appointment of the seventy additional disciples, he had a respect to the seventy elders of Israel. The increase of labourers showed that there was an increase in the hearers of the gospel and in the followers of Christ. Let each one of us pray, that during our lives there may be a rapid

and abundant increase of the friends and followers of Christ.

Observe the manner in which our Saviour sent them. He sent them two and two. He did so that they might strengthen and encourage one another. If one should fall, the other was near and ready to raise him up. He did not send them to all the cities of Israel, but to every place and city where he himself would come. Thus, they were to go before him as harbingers, to tell the people that Jesus would appear among them, and to prepare them for his kind and gracious visit. Blessed Jesus, prepare our hearts to receive thee!

The work which our Saviour required of them was two-fold. They were to heal the sick, and to perform in his name miracles of mercy. This would prepare the minds of the people to receive Jesus, and fill them with longing desires to see Jesus. When they saw such miracles performed by his very name, what must they think of the person of him by whose name such wonders were accomplished? In addition to the performance of miracles, our Lord required the seventy to preach to the people that the kingdom of God was come nigh them. By this kingdom, we are to understand the dispensation of mercy and salvation. Let us rejoice that this kingdom is actually come, that the gospel of this kingdom is proclaimed in our land. Young readers, may God the Spirit introduce you into the kingdom of grace, and at death into the kingdom of glory!



THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.
John VIII. ver. 4.



When busy malice to the Saviour's side
Brought a poor culprit, self-condemn'd and sad,
His wondrous wisdom crush'd th' Accuser's pride,
And sent the Sinner, from his presence glad!

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

JOHN VIII. 4. A. D. 32.

THE Scribes and Pharisees were the inveterate and constant enemies of Christ. They often interrupted him in his ministry, and they frequently laid snares for him, to entangle him in his speech. O what folly—what wickedness! How could human craft and cunning ever succeed in the ensnaring of Him in whom dwelt all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge? Impossible!

They laid a snare for him in bringing before him a woman taken in adultery, which snare he easily and admirably escaped.

They placed the guilty woman before Christ, as a prisoner is placed at the bar before the judge. They pretend to confer great honour upon him; they call him Master. This name might be taken to intimate an high opinion of Christ's knowledge and wisdom. However worthy of the name, while the language of respect was upon the lips of these men, malignity against Christ reigned in their hearts.

The crime with which the woman was charged was that of adultery. By the Jewish law, those who were guilty of this sin were put to death. And while the Jews were under the Roman government, they were allowed, in this and in many other cases, to put in force their own criminal laws.

The Jews declared that the guilt of the woman was so evident, that no doubt remained respecting the fact. Besides, the woman herself made no attempt either to deny the sin, or plead any excuse for its commission.

The Jews mentioned the law of Moses respecting this sin, that they who were guilty of it should be put to death, Lev. xx. 10. God, as a divine Sovereign, had an undoubted right to appoint this punishment, in the peculiar circumstances in which the Jewish nation was placed. It also proclaimed God's great abhorrence of a sin which has brought such complicated misery on thousands of the human race. Young readers, pray for grace, that you may be preserved from vain companions, who easily lead astray into the paths of unhallowed pleasure and all manner of uncleanness.

The Jews sought Christ's opinion in this case, hoping, that whatever opinion he would give, they should succeed in entangling him. Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground, as apparently unconcerned about what they said. Still they continued pressing him for his opinion. At last he did answer them, and with one sentence addressed to their conscience, resembling a thunderbolt, filled them with confusion and shame. He said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Convinced that they were as guilty as the woman, they went out one by one, until Jesus was left alone. She stood before him an humble penitent,—in the presence of that Saviour, who we trust washed all her guilt away. Jesus said unto her, "Go, and sin no more."



He who feels a christian's care
For his Neighbor, will not spare
Pains, or toil, or costly store,
'Till the work of love is o'er!

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

LUKE X. 30—36. A. D. 32.

OUR Saviour, in the parable of the *Good Samaritan*, shows who is *our neighbour*, in opposition to the false doctrine which was taught by the Jewish teachers. They taught that none were their neighbours but the Jews. They would not put an Israelite to death for killing a Gentile, because, they said, he is not our neighbour.

In this parable we have an account of a poor Jew, in great distress, succoured and relieved, not by those of his own country and people, but by a *Samaritan*, one hated and despised by the Jewish nation. The poor Jew found none of his own people to look upon him as a *neighbour*, or to act toward him a *neighbour's* part. But a despised Samaritan found him in his great affliction, treated him as a neighbour, and nobly acted a humane and generous neighbour's part.

The situation of the poor Jew is described as really deplorable. Following his usual calling and business, he was on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among thieves. ‡They robbed him of all he had upon his person. Not satisfied with robbing him of his property, they attempted to deprive him of his life. How often do we find robbery and murder connected ! Many who commit robbery, also commit murder, to conceal it. The thieves stripped the Jew of his

raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. In this sad situation he was left to perish, on the side of the highway.

The Saviour mentions the cold, unfeeling, barbarous treatment this afflicted Jew received from those who travelled along the road, and who saw him in his wretchedness. Two men came to him, namely, a priest and a Levite. These men filled sacred offices connected with the worship, the law, and the service of God. Surely, when they see the poor wounded Jew, we can expect nothing less than this—that they will show mercy and compassion to one of their own nation, and of their own church. And do they show this compassion? Do they look upon him as a neighbour, do they act a neighbour's part? Alas, they do the very reverse. When the priest saw him, he passed by on the other side. As for the Levite, he was as hardened and base. He came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

How different the conduct of the Samaritan, who belonged to another nation, and to a nation which the Jews held in the greatest abhorrence! The moment he saw him, his heart was moved with compassion. He lifted him up from the ground. He washed his bleeding wounds. He poured in oil and wine. He took him to a neighbouring inn, and made every provision for his comfort and recovery. He treated the poor Jew as his neighbour, and he acted towards him a neighbour's part. So Jesus acts to the afflicted, penitent, humble sinner.

JESUS WALKETH ON THE SEA.

MATT. XIV. 26. A. D. 32.

IN our meditations on the miracle of Christ walking upon the waves of the sea, we shall see a striking illustration of these lines :—

“ God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform ;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”

At the close of the day, when our Saviour had fed nearly ten thousand persons on five loaves and two fishes, he constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side of the Sea of Galilee, while he sent the multitude of people away, to go to their respective homes. The disciples were unwilling to go without their Master. This testified their love to him, and their confidence in him. Though it was painful for them to depart alone, yet as their Lord required it, they obeyed.

After the disciples had left, and the multitudes were sent away, Jesus went into a mountain to pray. And when the evening was come, he was there alone, enjoying fellowship with his Father. O what delightful fellowship—the fellowship of the Father and the Son !

While Jesus was pouring out his soul in prayer into the bosom of his Father, the little ship which contained the disciples was tossed with waves in the midst of the sea. Long before midnight the disciples expected to

have arrived in safety at the opposite shore. But the wind was contrary. It was not only contrary, but violent. They were unable, with their oars, to make any progress by rowing. So violent was the wind, and so boisterous the waves, that they were placed in the greatest peril, and were really in danger of perishing. On a similar occasion before, Christ was with them in the ship. They cried to him for help, and he saved them. He showed his Almighty power, by changing the storm into a calm. But now, in this frightful tempest, Jesus was not with them in the ship. If they were not actually in despair, they were upon the very brink. They feared they should no more see their peaceful homes, that they should no more see their blessed Master.

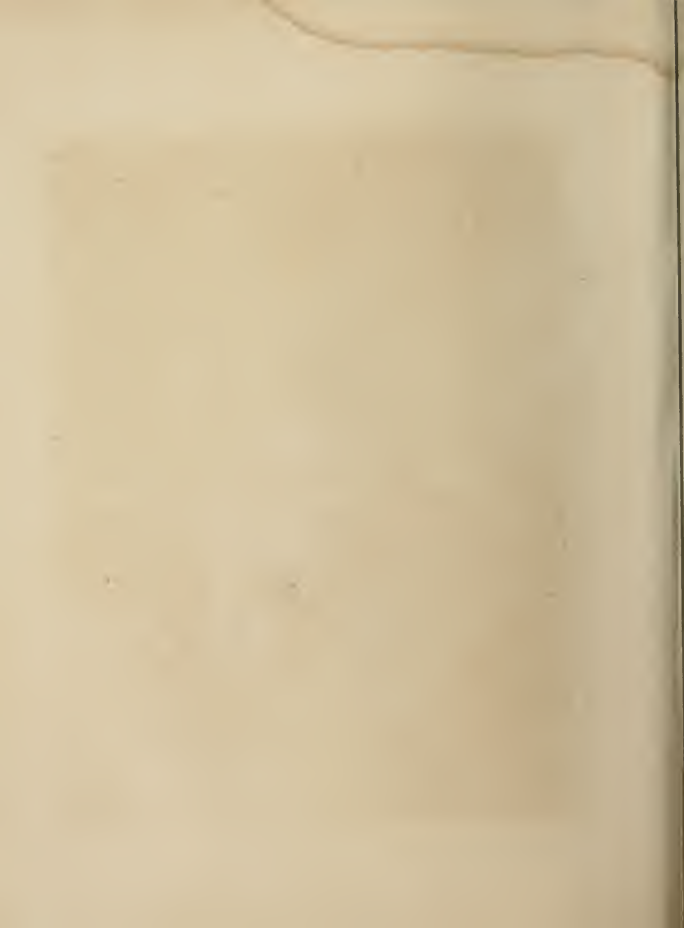
While their minds were surrounded with such gloomy clouds of fear, and while the rolling billows seemed to threaten them with immediate destruction, a circumstance occurred, which raised their terror and dismay to the greatest height. They saw what they considered a spirit, in the form of a man, walking upon the waves of the sea. They thought it was some demon of the deep, sent to bury them in the waves. They cried out for fear. It was the agonizing shriek of despair! O how their hearts were cheered when they heard the voice of Jesus! But straightway Jesus spake unto them, and said, "Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid."

JESUS WALKETH ON THE SEA.

Matt. xiv. ver. 26.



When Jesus walk'd upon the sea by night,
His weak Disciples trembled with affright;
But He to calm their spirits, spake and said,
"Be of good cheer, 'tis I, be not afraid!"

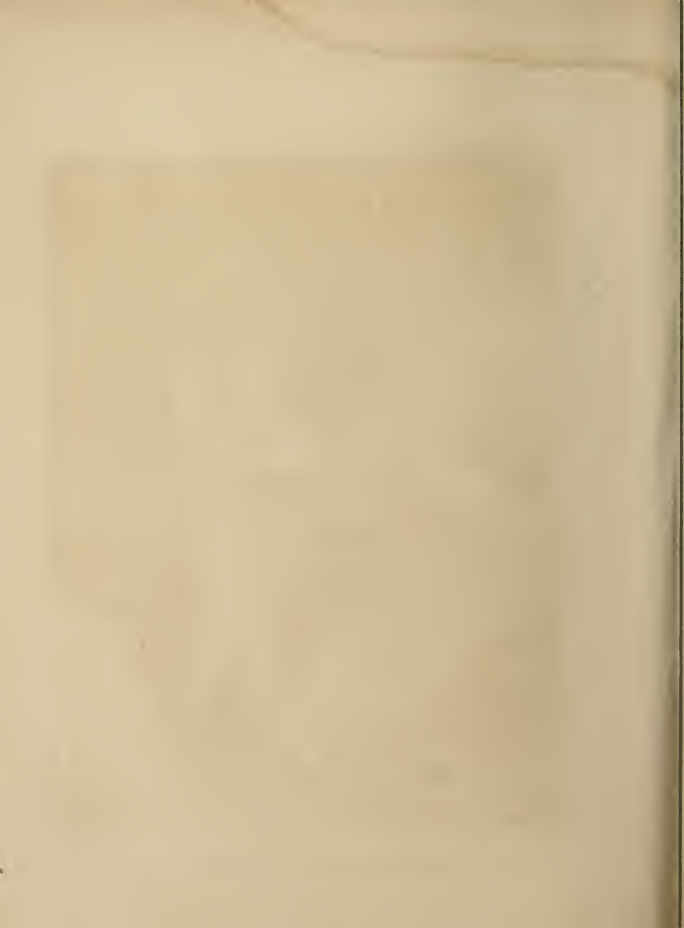


PETER SINKING.

Matt. XIV, ver. 31



When sinking Peter cried with dread,
His Lord his hand stretch'd out ;
And "Thou of little faith," he said -
"Oh wherefore didst thou doubt?"



PETER SINKING.

MATT. XIV. 31. A. D. 32.

WHEN the disciples imagined they saw a supernatural being walking on the waves of the sea, they were greatly alarmed. Jesus, who on a former occasion silenced the raging of the storm, very soon silenced the tempestuous storm of despair which raged in the bosom of his disciples. He said, "It is I, be not afraid." When the well-known accents of his voice fell upon their ear, their hearts were filled with joy and peace.

At this time the conduct of Peter was very conspicuous and singular. Peter was the first, among his astonished and delighted friends, who addressed the Saviour, after they heard his welcome voice, and were satisfied it was indeed their Master and their Friend. He said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the water." Here Peter showed his *affection* to Christ. O how Peter longed to see Christ in the midst of the storm, when he knew that none but Christ could save them! It was the longing of the most ardent affection. Now that he sees Christ walking on the waves, and actually coming to the help of the disciples, his love becomes so strong, that he wishes to leave the ship, and proceed at once to the Saviour he loved. In his request he shows his submission to the will of Christ. He wishes to go to

Christ, and meet him on the waves of the sea ; but he does not wish to go in opposition to the will of Christ. Blessed state of mind, to have our will in complete submission to the will of Christ ! Here we have also an instance of Peter's *faith*. In the very face of the raging waves, and even of death itself, he is willing and ready to leave the ship, and, at Christ's command, to go to him, in defiance of the contending billows.

Jesus bids him come. There were difficulties, and raging waves in his way ; but the invitation of Christ is sufficient encouragement for him to believe that no dangers will successfully prevent his actually coming to his Lord. Young friends, Jesus bids *you* come. Oh, obey his call ! Say unto him, " Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God."

Encouraged by the invitation of his Master, Peter descends from the ship. His faith was so strong, that he really walked upon the waves of the sea. The waves were tempestuous, and the winds loud, but while his faith remained vigorous, he was prevented from sinking in the waters. His faith begins to shake, and his confidence to become weak. " When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid ; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me." It was of great service to Peter to feel his weakness, to see his danger, and that none but Jesus could give him help. Finding he was sinking, he cried earnestly to Jesus. No sooner is his prayer presented, than it is answered : " Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him. And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased."



"Great is thy faith," the loving Saviour cried,
To Canaan's Suppliant, kneeling at his side;
Her pray'r was heard, and by his sovereign pow'r,
Her Daughter was made whole that very hour!



THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

MATT. XX. 28. A. D. 32.

OUR Saviour entered upon a very extensive journey, for the purpose of showing a great and blessed act of kindness and compassion to a poor afflicted woman. She lived in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, two very celebrated cities of ancient Phenicia, and situated upon the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean Sea. She was a Gentile, and her daughter was possessed of a devil. How long, we cannot tell ; but this was an affliction, of all others the most severe. The mother is called a woman of Canaan,—clearly intimating Christ's love to Gentiles as well as Jews. His kindness to this woman and her daughter, was an earnest of what he intended to do to Gentile nations. This act of mercy was a beam of that glorious light which Jesus was destined to pour on Gentile myriads.

When Jesus drew near to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, the woman of Canaan came to him. Jesus came to show mercy to the woman : and having come, the afflicted woman applied to him, imploring mercy. How interesting,—the Saviour willing to show mercy, and the woman earnest to receive mercy !

Observe the *fervour* of her prayer,—*she cried unto him*. It was a mother feeling for her daughter ; it was a mother praying for her daughter ; and it was a mother praying for a greatly-afflicted daughter, who could not

pray for herself. Young readers, beware of cold, heartless prayers. May your prayers be a glowing flame, rising from the fire of sacred devotion, kindled in the soul by the breath of the Holy Ghost !

She affectingly mentions the situation of her daughter : " My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." All who were possessed of devils were not *equally* afflicted. But the *possession* of this young woman was of the very worst description. The mother cries for mercy : " Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David." Here she owns Christ to be the Messiah. This was the common name which the Jews gave to the promised Messiah. We have reason to believe that the woman was a genuine believer in Christ, and a real saint of God.

She met with discouragements from Jesus. All this was wisely designed, to try her faith, and to excite her earnestness. For some time Jesus answered her not a word. Still she continued her supplications. The disciples wished to send her away. This only made her more importunate. Then Jesus told her he was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Still not discouraged, she fell down at his feet, and worshipped him, saying, " Lord, help me." Jesus said it was not meet to take the children's bread, and give it to dogs. See her humility ! she acknowledges she is but a dog ; adding, " Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Now—now—her prayer is answered. Jesus extols her faith, and makes her daughter whole !

MARY AND MARTHA.

Luke X, ver. 42.



While busy Martha, with an anxious heart,
To serve her Saviour toild with ceaseless care!
Her Sister Mary chose the better part
To hear his word, and in his converse share



MARY AND MARTHA.

LUKE X. 38—42. A.D. 32.

THERE was a family of great holiness in the days of our Saviour's humbled humanity, of which very honourable notice is taken in the Holy Scriptures. It consisted of three individuals; namely, Lazarus, the brother, and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. We are now to consider some very interesting particulars of which St. Luke makes mention respecting Mary and Martha.

He informs us that Martha gave an entertainment at her house to Jesus and his disciples. "Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house." Martha loved Jesus, and considered it the greatest honour and delight to have such a friend, such a guest, and such a Saviour, under her roof. While others in the town of Bethany would not receive him into their houses, Martha, in defiance of all dangers, welcomed him to her abode. "O Jesus, come and enter into our hearts! O come and take up thy residence in our abodes!"

Luke informs us of the attendance which Mary gave to the word of our Lord. Martha's love was strong, but it appears that the love of Mary exceeded that of Martha. "She sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word." It seems, that as soon as Jesus entered the house and

sat down, he began to preach and to teach. No sooner did he open his mouth to teach, than Mary sat down at his feet, and opened her ears to hear the precious words which fell from his lips. Yes, they were precious; they were sweeter than honey, they were more valuable than fine gold, they were more fragrant than the most odoriferous ointment. Would to God that we estimated Jesus' words as Mary did! We are informed that Martha, notwithstanding her love to Jesus, was sinfully cumbered with the care of her domestic matters. "But Martha was cumbered about much serving." She was really displeased with Mary her sister, for sitting at her Saviour's feet, and allowing her alone to attend to the repast which she was preparing for her Lord. She actually made a complaint to her Saviour. "Lord, dost thou not care, that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." This has the appearance of finding fault with Jesus as well as her sister Mary.

O how admirable, how faithful, and how kind our Saviour's reply! "Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her."

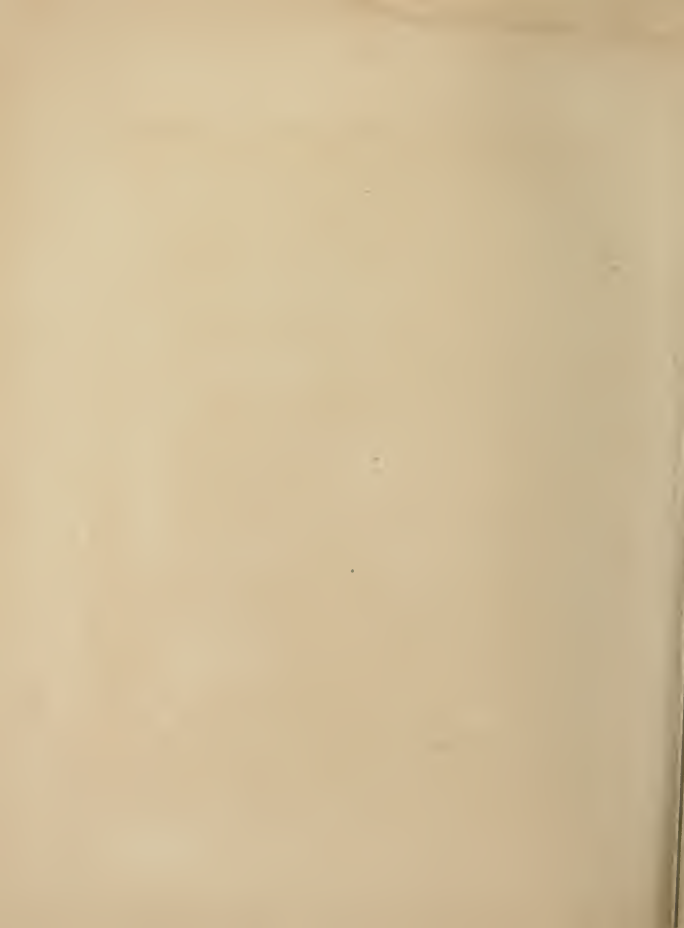
Lord Jesus, thou art that good part; enable us to choose thee!

CHRIST HEALS THE BLIND MAN.

John IX, ver. 1, 7.



While the Saviour passing by,
Gaz'd on human misery,
By his words and actions kind,
He was sight into the blind.



JESUS HEALS THE BLIND MAN.

JOHN IX. 1—7. A. D. 32.

THE prophet Isaiah, in his glowing predictions respecting our Lord, says, "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." What the prophet foretold was literally fulfilled in the matchless history of our Saviour while he dwelt on earth among the sons of men.

On a certain occasion, when he passed by, he saw a man who was blind from his birth. *He saw him*, that is, he took particular notice of him. He saw him in wretchedness; he saw him in his blindness; he saw him in his destitution and poverty. He saw him and pitied him; he saw him, and wished to relieve him; he saw him, and determined to save him and heal him. "Lord Jesus, look upon us, and have mercy upon us!"

The condition of this man was peculiarly deplorable and sad. He had a complication of sorrows, and a complication of sufferings. He was blind. O what a calamity to be blind, to be shut out from the glories of the visible creation, and to be unable to behold the light of day! His blindness had not been of short duration. It was of long continuance. It was from his birth.

He was born blind. He was *so* blind, and so long blind, that his case was hopeless. There was no prospect that he should ever be able to behold the animating and cheering light of the sun of heaven. He was not only blind, but *poor*. O how much poverty adds to other calamities ! Other calamities are greatly aggravated and increased, when connected with poverty. He was so poor, that he ~~was~~ was under the necessity of begging for his support.

The disciples seeing Jesus taking notice of the poor blind beggar, addressed to our Lord a very singular question. " They asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he is born blind ? " The Pythagorean philosophers had a notion, that souls at death went from one body to another ; and also, if a man led a wicked life, his soul at death was sent into a worse body than what it left, or into the body of a beast or a reptile. There is some probability of the disciples being tinctured with this notion, for they said, " Who did sin, *this man*, that he is born blind ? " Jesus answered their question by informing them, the man was born blind that the works of God should be made manifest in him. The healing of this man was one of the works of God which Jesus was sent to perform ; and therefore he says, " I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day. " That work he did by opening the eyes of this blind man.

THE POOL OF SILOAM.

John IX, ver 7



Why had Siloam's pool such virtues rare,
To cure the blind beyond the Leech's skill?
Because the Saviour sent the Sufferer there;
And gave it pow'r to execute his will.

THE POOL OF SILOAM.

JOHN IX. 7. A.D. 32.

THE pool of Siloam is rendered remarkable in sacred history, by the cure of the blind man, who, at the command of Jesus, washed his eyes in its waters, and was instantly blessed with sight. Our Saviour having answered a question of his disciples respecting the man who was born blind, proceeded at once to perform the miracle.

“He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation, Sent. He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing.”

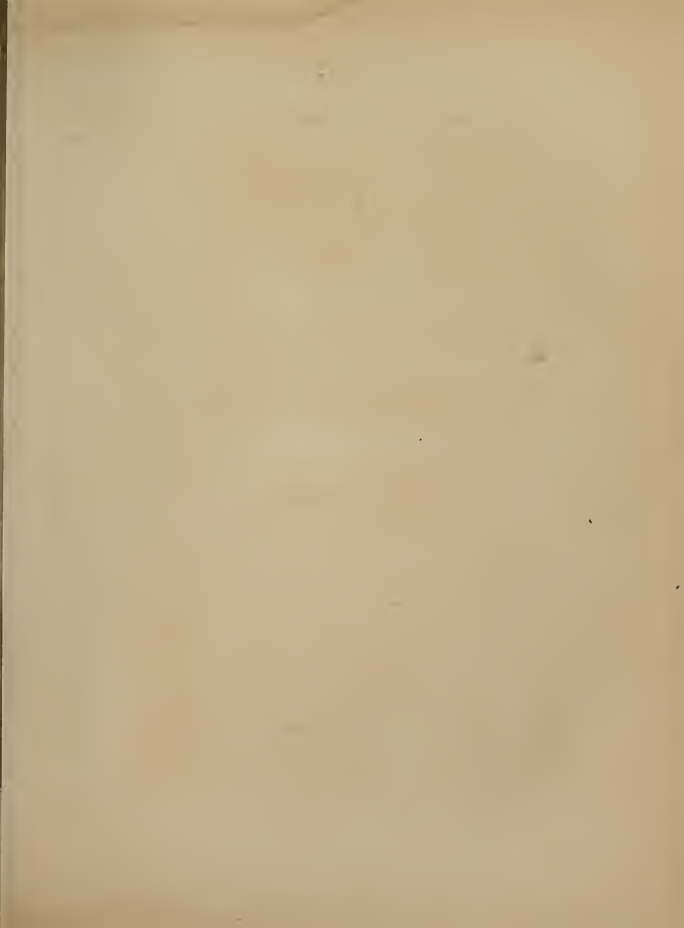
As to this remarkable pool, its name signifies *sent*. There is a close correspondence betwixt the name of the pool, and our Saviour *sending* the poor blind man on such an important errand, as to go and wash in its waters, that he might receive the unspeakable blessing of having his blindness exchanged for sight. This should remind us, that Jesus is the SENT of the Father. He is the Messenger of the covenant. Mal. iii. 1 : “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in : behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.” As Jesus sent the blind man to the pool of Siloam to wash, and receive his sight, so, as a

prophet, he sends us to himself as a priest, and says, Go, wash in the fountain of my blood, my righteousness, my spirit; a fountain opened, not a pool shut up, a flowing, an ever-flowing fountain, whence the waters of salvation copiously flow.

Siloam is said to have been the same as the Gihon, and to have had its spring on the west of Jerusalem. It is said to have had two pools; the pool of Siloam, near the south-east of the temple, and the pool of Shelah, or Siloah, somewhere to the westward. It was supplied with water from Mount Zion, on account of which they were called the Waters of the Sanctuary. These waters are most beautifully alluded to in Psalm xlii. 4, as figurative of the waters of salvation, the mighty and everlasting river of goodness, which flows from Christ the divine fountain. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." Very likely the prophet Ezekiel alluded to these waters of Siloam, in the following description, chap. xlvii. 9. "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: for they shall be healed: and every thing shall live whither the river cometh."

The waters of Siloam are taken to signify the throne and house of David, evidently pointing to the kingdom of the Messiah. Isa. viii. 6, "This people refuseth the waters of Shiloah, that go softly."

O Lord, how long shall the Jews refuse these waters of salvation—Christ and his salvation!





The sheep of whom the Shepherd makes his choice
Will always hear and always know his voice ;
And though they sometimes from his pastures stray ,
He will not let them wander far away .

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

JOHN X. 14. A. D. 32.

' OUR Lord Jesus Christ is frequently called *Shepherd* in the Holy Scriptures. He is called God's Shepherd. Zech. xiii. 7: "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow." He is called God's Shepherd, because his Father committed the church, as a flock, to his pastoral and mediatorial care; because he appointed him to die for their salvation, and ever afterwards to feed them; first, in the pastures of grace on earth, and afterwards in the pastures of glory in heaven. Jesus is called the *One Shepherd*, Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3: "And I will set up *one shepherd* over them and he shall feed them, even my servant David," (that is, Christ :) "he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd." He is called the *One Shepherd*, because he alone owns the sheep, and he alone answers and supplies their wants.

Jesus is called the *Great* and *Chief* Shepherd, Heb. xiii. 20: "Our Lord Jesus, that *great* Shepherd of the sheep." 1 Pet. v. 4, "And when the *chief* Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away." He is called *great* and *chief*, because he is infinitely great in himself; he is highly exalted as our Mediator; he has the supreme management of the church in his hand; and ministers and magistrates are but subject to him.

By way of eminence, our Lord is called the *Good Shepherd*, John x. 11: "I am the good Shepherd: the

good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." Ver. 14, "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."

Jesus is infinitely worthy of being called the Good Shepherd, principally on two accounts : first, his affectionate knowledge of his flock ; and secondly, because he laid down his life for his sheep.

He is the Good Shepherd, because of his affectionate knowledge of his flock : He knows his sheep. With a distinguishing eye he knows, he discerns, who are his sheep, and who are not. No appearances can deceive him. He knows them and loves them. His regard for them is most tender and compassionate : "He gathers the lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom." He knows them and directs them : "He leadeth Joseph like a flock." He guides them with his eye. O blessed Guide ! Let each young person pray, "O Jesus, be thou my guide !"

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land,
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold me with thy powerful hand."

Jesus is the *Good* Shepherd, the best of all shepherds, for he "laid down his life for the sheep." "I lay down my life for the sheep." It is a great mark of love for one man to *venture* his life for another. Jesus did more than venture, or endanger his life : he actually died, he laid it down. It was not taken from him by violence. He did it willingly, that his lost sheep might be redeemed, and at last collected in the glorious fold of heaven.

JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

Mark X, ver. 15.



Suffer them to come to me,
Hinder not nor let them go;
Suffer them to come to me,
That my mercy they may know.

JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

MARK X. 16. A. D. 32.

THE holy Evangelist gives the following affecting account of our Saviour's very tender and affectionate regard for little children, which he manifested by taking them up into his arms and blessing them: "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

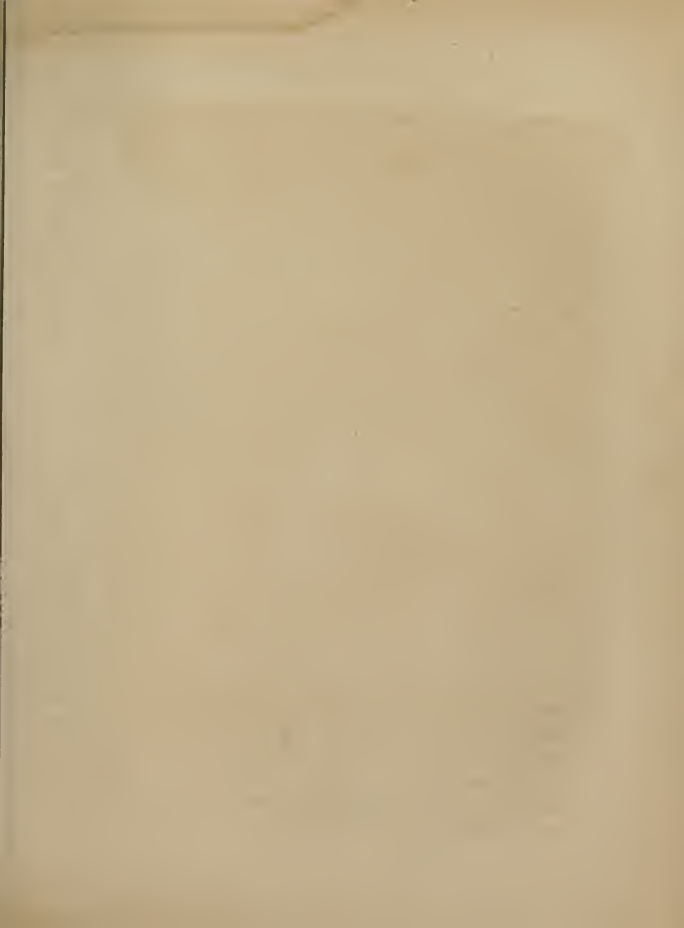
In this piece of history we see that little children are brought to Christ, that the disciples discouraged those who brought them, but that our Lord gave them a most kind and affectionate welcome.

Little children were brought to Christ. It is likely that they who brought them were their parents. O what a pleasing sight! parents bringing their children to Jesus! It does not appear that the bodies of their children were diseased. It was for their precious souls—the eternal salvation of their never-dying souls, the anxious parents were chiefly concerned. What a blessing to children when *their* parents feel such

concern. These parents did well ; they took their children immediately to Jesus. Blessed are those parents who give their children to Jesus, and blessed are those children who are committed to the care, the keeping, the arms, the bosom of such a Saviour.

The disciples discouraged the mothers ; they placed an hindrance in their way : they even rebuked them. O how foolish ! O how inconsistent ! At that time the disciples were very ignorant, and in many things very inconsistent. What different men they were after the day of Pentecost ! It is deplorable and heart-rending, when those who are called the ministers of Christ hinder and discourage young or old from coming to Christ. Would to God that none of such a temper and character were found in our land !

How lovely the conduct of our Lord ! HE encouraged the parents in the very kindest manner to bring to *him* their offspring and receive his blessing. He was displeased with his disciples for attempting to prevent the very end for which Christ came from heaven to earth, namely to seek, to save, and to bless, the lost. Then he ordered the children to be brought. The parents stood in earnest, anxious expectation. They longed to bring their children. Now they have the kind, the gracious invitation—the kind, the gracious call, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. And he took them up into his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” He blessed them with salvation, and adorned them with grace.



THE PRODIGAL SON.

Luke XV. ver II, 32



Give me the gold that falleth to my share,
The younger Son unto his Father cries;
And straightway mounts his willing steed to bear
His wealth to riot under distant skies!

THE PRODIGAL SON.

LUKE XV. 11—32. A. D. 32.

THE design of this instructive parable is, to show how pleasing to God is the conversion of sinners, and even of the greatest sinners. Great is the joy of angels when sinners are converted unto God. But as the star, with all its beauty, is nothing compared with the glory of the sun, the joy of angels is nothing when compared with the joy of God over repenting, returning, converted sinners. This parable holds out the greatest encouragement to penitent, broken-hearted sinners to return to God, whom they have offended, to fall down at his feet, not only to implore, but to receive his mercy.

In this wonderful parable God is represented as the common Father of all mankind. It is from him, as our Father, we have derived our being. It is from him, as our Father, we receive our maintenance and support. It is from him, as our Father, we receive our salvation and our portion.

The parable represents the whole human race by the two sons. The elder son represents the Jews and the Jewish church; and the youngest son represents publicans, sinners, and gentiles, whom Christ came to save, as well as Jews; and whom the apostles were appointed to call to repentance, holiness, and salvation.

The *younger son*, he is the *prodigal*; and his character and case are employed to represent the state of sinners by nature and practice, who are far from God, and, alas, hastening rapidly to destruction, unless

mercifully prevented by the kind interposition of a kind and gracious God.

The particulars of this parable are very affecting. What makes them the more affecting is this, that they have been true in numberless instances in all ages, and are true in multitudes in the present day. Consider the state of the prodigal son, while his prodigality lasted. First, he very pertly and impudently asked his father for the portion of wealth that fell to his share. He is an emblem of graceless sinners, who wish a present portion suited to their carnal taste, and have no desire for a holy and better portion beyond the grave. This young man did not love his father's government, nor the order of his father's house. He wished, therefore, to be gone. Sad emblem of sinners, who have no love to God as their father, and cannot bear to be under his wise government and gracious restraint !

The father agreed to the son's request. He gave him his portion. God gave us at first a rich portion in Adam, which we soon lost. And he still gives a portion consisting of many blessings. *These* are employed by graceless sinners in the service of their lusts, and as instruments of rebellion against a kind and gracious God.

The prodigal son having obtained his portion, went far distant from his father's house, spent his all with riotous living. At last there was a famine. He was obliged to feed swine for his support, and was reduced by his folly to poverty and want.

O sinner, this is thy case !

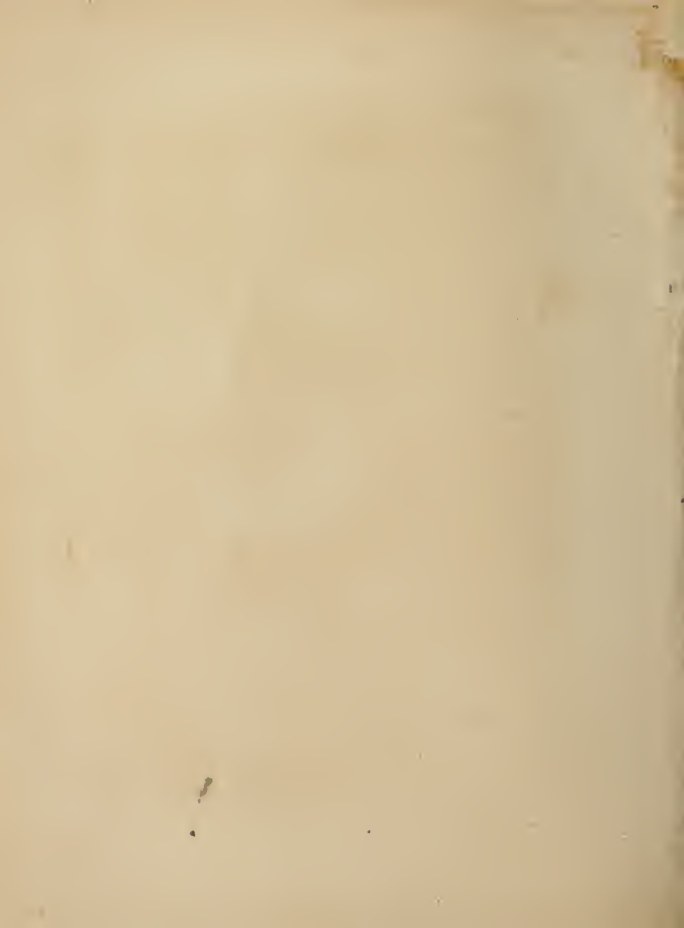
THE PRODIGAL SON.
Luke IV. ver. II. 32



When to repent the Prodigal began,

He hasten'd home, with haggard looks and wild;

His Father saw him from afar, and ran



THE PRODIGAL SON.

LUKE XV. 11—32. A. D. 32

How affecting the situation of the poor *prodigal son*, when reduced to destitution, poverty, rags, hunger, and misery! Look at him before he left his father's house, enjoying every domestic comfort, having enough and to spare, attended by dutiful servants, and possessing all that was calculated to promote comfort and peace. Then look at him after he had spent his all, obliged to hire himself to a citizen to feed swine, and at the same time so pressed with hunger as to be compelled to feed himself on the very husks which the swine did eat. O what a change! Is not this a striking emblem of the dreadful consequences of a life of sin, and of the abject misery to which the slaves of lust are reduced by forsaking God, and devoting themselves to the service of their hateful lusts! The following lines of WATTS describe his degradation and misery:

“ Behold the wretch, whose lust and wine
 Had wasted his estate,
 He begs a share among the swine,
 To taste the husks they eat!”

When the poor prodigal felt his misery, he began to think of his father and his father's house, and the comfort and protection to be enjoyed under his father's roof. While his money and his carnal pleasures lasted, he never thought either of his father he had forsaken, or the comforts of his father's house which he had

despised. But when want and affliction pressed upon him, then he saw his folly, then he mourned over his sinful delusion. Then he began to think of his kind and affectionate father ; then he began to think of the advantages to be derived from his fellowship, and the pleasures to be enjoyed under his paternal government. Then, and not till then, he felt the desire to return.

“ I die with hunger here (he cries),
I starve in foreign lands,
My father's house has large supplies,
And bounteous are his hands.”

He forms the determination of returning. He says, “ I will arise and go to my father.” Such language the penitent sinner employs, when, by divine grace, he is resolved to return to his Father and his God. How suitable the paraphrase of Watts !

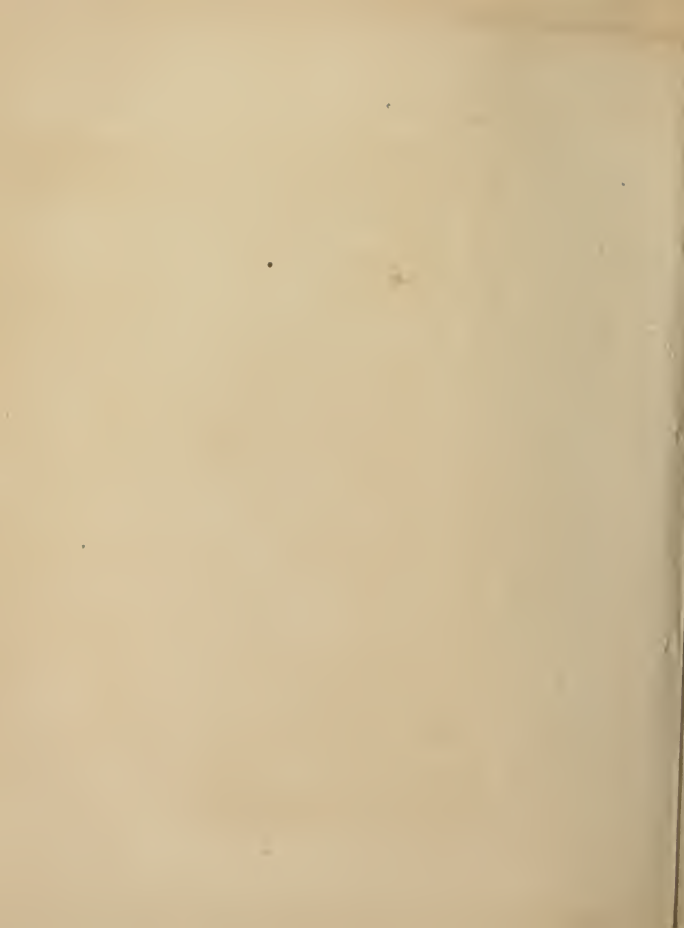
“ I'll go, and with a mournful tongue,
Fall down before his face ;
Father, I've done thy justice wrong,
Nor can deserve thy grace.”

He ventured to return. And was he accepted ? O yes ! What reason we have to rejoice : God is more ready to accept than we are to apply ! the father saw the poor prodigal son at a distance. Though emaciated and in rags, he remembered his son. He pitied, he loved him !

“ The father saw the rebel come,
And all his bowels move :
He ran and fell upon his neck,
Embraced and kissed his son ;
The rebel's heart with sorrow brake,
For follies he had done.”



The Brutes sometimes that kindness shew,
To soothe the pangs of mortal woe,
Which Man who deems his Spirit wise
In selfish ignorance denies.



LAZARUS AT THE RICH MAN'S DOOR.

LUKE XVI. 21, &c. A.D. 33.

THE parable of the Prodigal Son sets before us the grace of the gospel, which is encouraging to all who feel their sinfulness, and see their need of salvation through a Saviour's death. Blessed truly are the people, who know, and believe, and enjoy the benefits of the joyful sound! But, O what a lesson is taught by the parable of the *Rich Man* and *Lazarus*! It sets before us the wrath to come. And who can conceive what that wrath is! It is designed to awaken those who are fast asleep. And as one observes, "They must be fast asleep indeed in sin whom this parable does not awaken."

A description is given of the rich man in the day of his temporal prosperity. His raiment was costly, fine linen and purple. He lived upon the choicest viands, and he drunk the most delicious wines. Alas, many are clothed in purple who are never clothed with the robe of righteousness, and many wear a golden crown who never wear a crown of glory that cannot fade away! Alas, many live on the most delicious food, who never hunger and thirst after righteousness! Alas, many drink the choicest wine, who never thirst after the waters of salvation, and who never drink of the wine of divine consolation!

A certain beggar named Lazarus lay at the gate of the rich man. What a difference betwixt the lordly

inhabitant within and poor Lazarus without ! The one was clothed in purple, the other in rags. The one faring sumptuously every day, the other wished to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. The one inhabiting a palace, the other lying at his gate. The one wallowing in wealth, the other in want, and begging for support. The one in health, the other covered with running sores. The one attended by servants in livery, the other by dogs licking his wounds. O what a difference !

But there was a greater difference still : the one was graceless, the other was gracious. The one was a child of Satan, the other a child of God. The one was an heir of hell, the other an heir of heaven.

They were different in life, and they were more different in death ! The rich man died, and was cast into hell ; Lazarus died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The one died, and his soul was imprisoned with devils ; the other died, and his soul was raised to glory for ever to shine among the heavenly hosts. The soul of the one was conveyed to utter darkness of despair, and the soul of the other to enjoy the delights of immortality. The soul of the one was conveyed to that land where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth ; and the soul of Lazarus to that heaven which is filled with sounds of sweetest praise !

LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

Matt. XX. ver. 1. 16.



The day of toil for all is past , -
And the reward for all is free :
And I will give unto this last
As much as I have giv'n to thee !



LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.

MATT. XX. 1—16. A. D. 33.

THE parable of the labourers in the vineyard, is very instructive. Our Saviour's design in this parable, is to show that God is debtor to no man. Nothing can be more foolish than to imagine that the great Creator can by any possible means be a debtor to his creatures. We cannot by the most splendid virtues make God our debtor, for God himself graciously bestows every virtue that can adorn the most distinguished of his intelligent beings. Acts of the most diligent and faithful obedience, cannot make God our debtor, for he is our divine Sovereign. He has therefore an undoubted and constant right to all our love, all our veneration, and all our obedience. He has a real right to all the love of which our nature is susceptible, and he has a right to every act of obedience we can possibly perform. When we have done all, if we are properly affected, we shall say, under the influence of the deepest humility and affection, "We are unprofitable servants; we have only done what it was *our duty* to do."

In this parable, we are informed, that the master of a family, and the possessor of a vineyard, made an agreement with a number of men to work in his vineyard for a penny a-day, and to begin their labour early in the morning. Some considerable time after, and about nine o'clock in the forenoon, he hired others who were standing idle in the market place, and he

engaged with them, that if they would labour faithfully in his vineyard to the close of the day, he would give them that which was right. They were satisfied with his proposal, and went their way into the vineyard to join themselves with the other labourers. He went out again about noon, and hired others upon the same terms. Again he went out one hour before the usual labours of the day ceased, and hired others only for that one hour. He made the same agreement as that which he made with those who were before hired to labour in the vineyard.

When even was come, he called all the labourers together to receive their wages. The first company of them, who were engaged for the whole day, they received their penny for which they agreed, and to which they readily gave their consent. Foolish men! they supposed they should have received more. But they were paid according to their own agreement. When the agreement was made they were perfectly satisfied; therefore they were greatly to blame in expecting and demanding more. They who worked fewer hours received the same amount, and they who laboured *one* hour were also paid the same sum. On this account, they who laboured the *whole* day found great fault and murmured. The master gave the following reply: "Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last even as unto thee."

Thus God is sovereign!



CHRIST AND ZEBEDEE'S CHILDREY.

Matt. X ver. 20.



Master, if thou seest fit,
Grant to these that they may sit
On thy left hand, and thy right,
In the kingdom of thy might.

CHRIST AND ZEBEDEE'S CHILDREN.

MATT XX. A.D. 33.

THE sons of Zebedee were James and John. Like most of the other disciples they were originally humble fishermen. When Jesus had called Simon and Andrew to be his disciples, while they were in the very act of casting their nets into the sea, he immediately went from thence, "and saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them." So powerful, so irresistible was the call, that they immediately left the ship, their father, and the nets, and followed Jesus. Blessed, infinitely blessed, are those youths, who are willing to leave all, and follow Jesus! May some young persons who read these pages, be animated with a missionary spirit, be willing to leave their kindred, and their country, and go to the remote parts of the earth, to proclaim to the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ!

James and John made a very strange request a short time before our Saviour's death. "And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory." This was their request.

What did they mean by this request? We reply, they considered that Christ came to form and establish a temporal kingdom on earth, that he was to act in the capacity of a great earthly king, to inhabit a splendid palace, to have a mighty army, and to be surrounded by nobles. They also supposed that they were to be elevated to great wealth, honour, and power. They believed the twelve disciples were to be twelve princes. James and John enjoyed greater intimacy with Christ than many of the other disciples. This kindness of Jesus, they wished to turn to advantage. They considered that no time was to be lost in improving the opportunity. They boldly presented their request, that they might not only be made princes, but that they might be raised superior to the other ten disciples, yea, that they might have the very nearest place to the throne, that the one might sit on the right hand, and the other on his left, when he rose to the enjoyment of his glory and power, as an earthly king.

This request betrayed great ignorance of Christ's kingdom, and of the important object of his mission from heaven to earth. It was not till the day of Pentecost, they and the other apostles were delivered from such foolish and carnal expectations.

How striking our Saviour's reply to their sinful and ambitious petition! "But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask." At that time they knew little of divine things. They were only babes in Christ. When they became men, they put away childish things.

TRIBUTE MONEY.

Mark XII, ver. 17



Why tempt ye me, ye Hypocrites,
With silver and with gold?
Give unto Cæsar, Cæsar's rights;
Nor God's from God withhold!

TRIBUTE MONEY.

MARK XII. 17. A.D. 33.

OUR Saviour, from the beginning to the close of his public ministry, was constantly beset and annoyed by enemies. As the Psalmist said, in prophecy, Psalm cxviii. 11, 12, "They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about. They compassed me about like bees."

On a certain occasion some of the Pharisees and the Herodians were sent on purpose to catch him in his words. When they were disappointed in taking his life, they laid snares to catch him in his words. The first class of tempters, the Pharisees, were great advocates for the Jews' liberty, and their deliverance from the yoke of Roman dominion. The Herodians were the very contrary—they were the great advocates for the Roman authority. However much they differed in their views about other things, they agreed most cordially in their enmity against Jesus, in their desire to ensnare him, and in their wish to destroy him. O how degraded man is, and how alienated from God by the reign of sin! "The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Let, however, the enemies of Christ remember this *sentence*, and be afraid—"To be carnally minded is death."

The Pharisees and the Herodians began their attack by using the words of hypocritical flattery. "They say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and

careth for no man ; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth." They spake truth *of* Christ, and to Christ, but their words were the professions of vile hypocrisy. Only think of the base purpose concealed under these words. They were smooth as oil, while there was hid under them the envenomed fang of the adder. How different too these words, from the uniform practice of those who uttered them, and who constantly thirsted for his blood and longed for his death !

They said, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? Shall we give or shall we not give?" If he had answered, it was right, then the Pharisees would have pronounced him an enemy of the Jews, and of the Jewish church. If he had said, it was not right to give tribute to Cæsar, then the Herodians would have pronounced him an enemy of the government, a rebel, a seditious man, a traitor, and therefore not worthy to live.

"But he knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it. And they brought it: and he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's. And Jesus answering, said unto them, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him." In saying, "Render to God the things that are God's," he confounded the Pharisees; and in saying, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," he confounded the Herodians.

THE WIDOW'S MITE.

Mark XII. ver. 42.



While rich Men from their wealth gave golden store,
Beside the Treasury stood a Widow poor ;
Her love was great although her heart was sad,
She cast in all the living' that she had !

THE WIDOW'S MITE.

MARK XII. 42. A.D. 33.

THE generosity of the poor widow who cast her two mites into the treasury of the temple, will be held in admiring remembrance through all generations.

There was in the Jewish church, in Jerusalem, a public fund for charitable purposes. The christian religion is a religion of mercy, and particularly encourages and promotes those plans which are calculated to relieve the afflicted, and to lessen the burden of suffering. There was a box fixed in a convenient place in the temple, for the receiving the contributions of the benevolent. Pious and devout people who went to that sacred building to worship God, were prepared by acts of worship for performing acts of charity.

Christ very particularly observed the conduct of the different individuals who cast money into the treasury. "Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much." Does not this show that our Saviour observes what we do for purposes of piety? He not only observes *what* we give, but also the *motives* from which we give. Holy Spirit, purify our motives, that whatever we do, we may do it as unto the Lord, and not for the purpose of being seen of men!

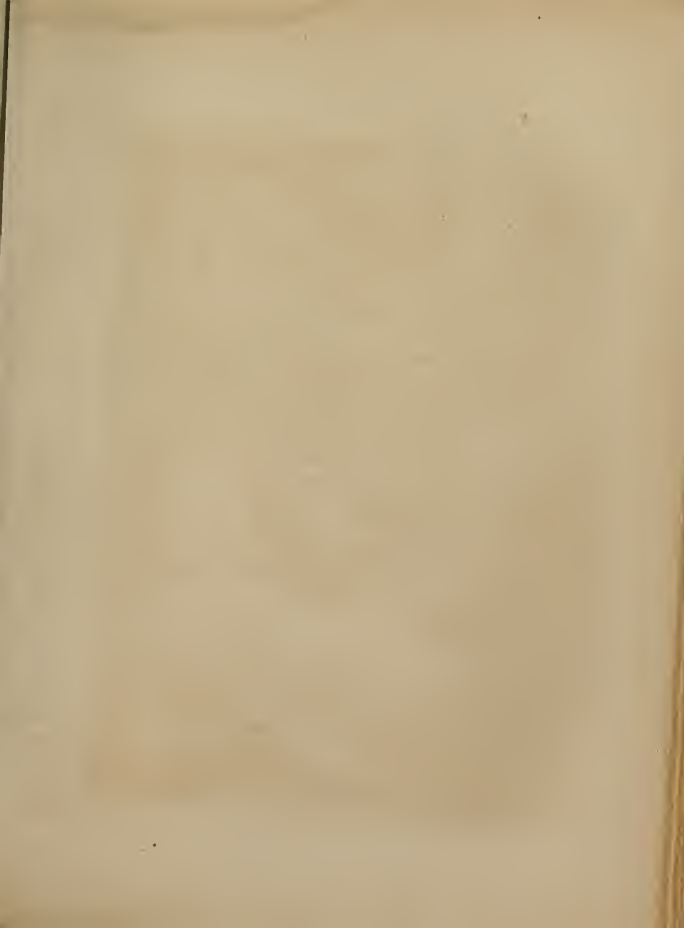
Jesus saw the rich giving much from their overflowing abundance. It is the duty of the rich to give abundantly to those objects which are well pleasing to God, for God has given abundantly to them. When

they give to God, they only give to God of his own. How seldom is this remembered by those to whom God has given much, "Where much is given, much will be required!"

There was one benefactor whom our Saviour observed, and whom our Saviour commended. She was a poor widow. She threw into the treasury two mites, which make a farthing. "And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they who have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

Many would have found fault with this poor widow, and have said she was more suitable to receive charity than to give it. They would have said, that in attempting to show an act of mercy to others she was committing an act of injustice to herself. Jesus as God searcheth the hearts. He saw the generosity of her soul, and the large compassion of her mind. Though poor in her circumstances, he saw she was rich in benevolence, kindness, and mercy. She had no treasures without, no houses, no lands, no coffers filled with silver and gold; but she had treasures within—benevolence, mercy, and love.

From this pious, but poor widow, let us learn lessons of practical goodness. We should learn to give alms, at the same time *wisely* considering the poor man's case. If we have but little, we should give something of that little to those who have less. Blessed are they, who can deny themselves, to lessen the sufferings of the afflicted!





The dead came forth at Jesu's word,
His sovereign pow'r to shew;
And all with joy the mandate heard,
"Loose him, and let him go!"

LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD.

JOHN XI. 39—44. A.D. 33.

THE raising of Lazarus to life is one of the most illustrious of our Lord's miracles. There is more said respecting this miracle, than any other which our blessed Saviour performed. This miracle, which it is our privilege now to consider, furnishes a most pleasing illustration of our Lord, as the Resurrection and the Life. O how happy and blessed shall we be, if we enjoy the saving and experimental knowledge of Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life! Then we shall never die. That is, our souls shall never be subject to the wrath of God and the miseries of hell, which in Scripture language are called death, and eternal death.

The family of Lazarus consisted of himself and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. They were all the subjects of grace, and the ardent, affectionate followers of Christ. Our Saviour was very warmly attached to them. Speaking after the manner of men, they were the most intimate of his private friends, whom he often personally visited, and to whose holy and peaceful abode he often resorted, to enjoy the soothing sweets of heavenly fellowship, after being nearly overwhelmed with his labours of mercy in the streets, and in the public places in Jerusalem.

When our Lord was in Galilee, several days' journey distant from Bethany, the town where this amiable and united family resided, Lazarus, to the unutterable

grief and anguish of the heart of his sisters, fell sick, and died. O how they wished Jesus had been present ! When the severe sickness fell on Lazarus, his sisters sent messengers to Jesus to come with haste and visit them in their affliction. Thus they fondly expected he would arrive in sufficient time to arrest the progress of the disease, and prevent the death of their brother.

At last Lazarus died, and with his death died the dearest earthly and social enjoyments of these holy and excellent women.

Jesus left Galilee and came to Bethany. On his arrival, Lazarus was found lying in the grave, and it was considered by his sisters that his body was undergoing the humiliating change of putrefaction.

Martha and Mary both met Jesus at their brother's grave. After some most useful and affectionate conversation, Jesus desired that the stone should be removed from the grave's mouth. When the stone was removed, Jesus said, " Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always ; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe thou hast sent me." Now follows the glorious display of the divinity of Christ's person, and of the divinity of his mission ; now we behold Jesus, the *plagues* of death, and the grave's *victory*. " When he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.'

MARY ANNOINTING JESUS' FEET.

John III. ver. 3.



With tears she wash'd his sacred feet,
And wip'd them with her flowing hair,
And freely took the ointment sweet,
And pour'd its costly fragrance there!



MARY ANOINTING JESUS' FEET.

JOHN XII. 3. A. D. 33.

SIX days before the Passover, and a few days before our Saviour's death, he paid a visit to Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. This was his farewell visit, and the last time he was to appear with his bodily presence, under the roof of the peaceful abode of that amiable and holy family, who had so large a share of the Saviour's favour and fellowship. As his death was near at hand, and as the event would fill their hearts with the most agonizing grief, Jesus was anxious to prepare them for the event, by leaving with them words of consolation, the sweet impression of which would abide with them all their days. Young friends, in all the afflictions which await you in future life, seek consolation from Jesus, and he will give what the world may promise to give, but what it never can bestow, namely, "the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Lazarus and his sisters gave Jesus a most affectionate and hospitable welcome. They made a supper for him, and the disciples who accompanied him. They did this as a testimony of their love. The value of a feast is greatly enhanced, when made from love. Christ's love to sinners appears by his preparing for them the gospel feast; and his love to his people by preparing the sacramental supper. Lazarus and his sisters prepared this supper for fellowship, as well as

friendship. O how they loved fellowship with Christ ! They would say from heartfelt experience, " Grace is poured into thy lips. His mouth is most sweet."

It is said, " Martha served." Though a woman of some quality, she considered herself infinitely honoured by waiting on her Saviour, even in the most humble capacity. We have no opportunity of waiting on Christ in the same manner. But whatever service we render to the poor members of his church, he considers as done to himself.

Amazing was the love and attention Mary showed to Jesus, while he sat at table. " Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair : and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." Her love was generous. She thinks no expense too great for manifesting her love to that Jesus, who did not consider his *very life* dear to him, that he might purchase our redemption by the highest price. Her love was blended with the greatest humility. She pours the costly ointment, *not* upon her Saviour's head, but upon his feet. In this she intimated her faith in Jesus as *the Christ*, the anointed. She anointed him with precious oil, whom she believed to have been anointed by the Holy Ghost, with oil infinitely more precious.

The odour of the ointment filled the house with a most pleasing fragrance. This shows that honours done to Jesus, are, to God and good men, " an offering of a sweet-smelling savour."





Behold the place where Jesus often dwelt,
While soft compassion all his spirit mov'd;
And Friends who glori'd in his presence felt
The joy of loving, and of being lov'd.

BETHANY.

MATT. XXI. 17, AND LUKE XIX. 2. A.D. 33.

BETHANY was a town situated near Jerusalem, and distant from that metropolis about fifteen furlongs. This place is not mentioned in the Old Testament; at least if it is, it is not under this name. But in the writings of the Talmud it is often mentioned; which proves that it was a place of considerable antiquity, and also, in the estimation of Jewish historians, a place of some importance.

It is situated to the east of the Mount of Olives, on the road to Jericho, a town which was a favourite residence of the Jewish priests. The situation is very pleasant, and somewhat romantic. It is sheltered by the Mount of Olives on the north, and abounding with long grass. It is now a very poor village, inhabited by Arabs; and the cultivation of the soil is at the lowest ebb. It is humiliating to consider the reverses which numerous towns and cities have undergone, by the sovereign visitations of the providence of God. These changes furnish us with useful illustrations of the cognizance which God takes of the sinful actions of men, which sooner or later will bring down upon their heads his righteous displeasure, unless prevented by a penitential abandonment of their iniquities.

It seems, however, that in our Saviour's time, it enjoyed some kind of trade, probably in olives, figs, and

dates, which abounded in this neighbourhood. The Jewish writings mention, that the shops of Bethany were destroyed three years before the destruction of Jerusalem. From this circumstance we infer that some trade must have been carried on in that place.

Now Bethany is chiefly noticed on account of the mention which is made of it in the New Testament. On visiting it, various spots and places are shown to pilgrims and travellers. Among these are the tomb and the ruins of the house of Lazarus; also the houses of his sisters, Mary and Martha, and the house of Simon the leper. That which is pointed out as the house of Lazarus, is a ruin, consisting of stones, which are very large. The architecture is substantial, but gloomy in its appearance. A celebrated traveller, whose opinion is entitled to great respect, very reasonably conjectures, that the ruins of the supposed house of Lazarus, form part of the convent which was built by Fulco, king of Jerusalem. It is likely Fulco built this convent, to keep up the remembrance of the remarkable events connected with the history of Lazarus.

Near these venerable ruins, is shown the alleged tomb of Lazarus. It is thus noticed by the same traveller:—"The exterior door-way of the tomb of Lazarus is formed artificially of stone-work; but the steep, narrow, and winding staircase which leads below, is cut in the living rock as well as the grave itself."

JESUS ENTERING JERUSALEM.

Luke XIX. ver. 35, 38.



Amidst the vast the wond'ring throng,
The Saviour meekly rode along,
Where verdant branches scatter'd lay,
And garments spread to deck his way.



JESUS ENTERING JERUSALEM.

LUKE XIX. 35—38. A.D. 33.

ALL the four Evangelists do not say the same things of Christ. Things omitted by one are mentioned by another, and thus the four united, furnish a full, and most blessed history of our Saviour's life on earth, and particularly his public ministry. What is particularly worthy of observation, all the four Evangelists take notice of our Lord's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem a short while before his death, amidst the joyful shouts of the people, and the sweet hosannahs of the children.

The time had now arrived that Jesus must die ; he therefore prepares to go to Jerusalem in the most public manner. He did this, to show himself as the Paschal Lamb, immediately before he should be sacrificed to make atonement for the sins of man. He adopted this method of public entering into Jerusalem in triumph, and amidst shouts of praise, that he might assert his kingly dignity, and that he was king of the Jews by hereditary descent, and by right.

When he came near to Jerusalem, "he sent two of his disciples, saying unto them, Go ye into the village over against you, and ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat : loose him, and bring him hither. And they went their way, and found even as he had said unto them." Here we have a striking display of our Saviour's omniscience. He told his disciples every

circumstance ; that they should find an ass's colt, where they should see it, that the owner of it would speak to them, what he would say, and that he would allow them to take the colt. According to what our Saviour said, every circumstance exactly took place.

What a remarkable procession ! The chief person in the procession is Christ, and is seen riding on an ass. Thus the following and ancient prophecy is fulfilled, "Tell ye the daughters of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass !" Humble equipage—an ass, and instead of a saddle and rich trappings suited to kingly dignity, the outer garments of some of the disciples were put upon it.

Who composed the retinue of King Jesus, on his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem ? Not the chief priests, not the great men of the church, or the grandees and nobles of the state ; not the learned, or the wealthy, or the mighty ; the retinue consisted of a great multitude of the common people, who have generally exemplified more genuine piety than any other order of the community.

The multitude of old and young were filled with an ecstasy of praise. They sung, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord ; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."

The Pharisees were offended, and rudely called on Jesus to rebuke them. He replied, "I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE FORETOLD,
Matt XXIV, ver. 1, 2



The goodly Buildings in their glory stand,
C'olumn on C'olumn rais'd, and stone on stone :
But lo ! destruction's hour is nigh at hand,
And all in ruin soon shall be overthrown.



DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE FORE- TOLD.

MATT. XXIV. 1, 2. A. D. 33.

THE Temple was the most important building that ever appeared on earth. The first temple was built by Solomon, and in every respect according to God's command, and the plan which God laid down. This most splendid structure continued from the days of Solomon, until the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Chaldea. It stood nearly four hundred years. The second temple was built after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity. Zorobabel, a Jew of great eminence and piety, was raised up of God and presided over its erection. It continued betwixt four and five hundred years, until the advent of Jesus. Herod, commonly called Herod the Great, and who filled the throne of Judah at the birth of Christ, repaired the second temple with the most extraordinary magnificence. It is said that the exterior consisted of the most beautiful polished marble stones, white as snow, and many of them twelve feet square.

The temple was built as the visible residence of God on earth. It was his palace, in which he dwelt, and in which he was known as the refuge of his people. The blazing Shechinah of the first temple, was the evidence of God's presence in that building as Israel's God. He said respecting it,—and what he said he did, and

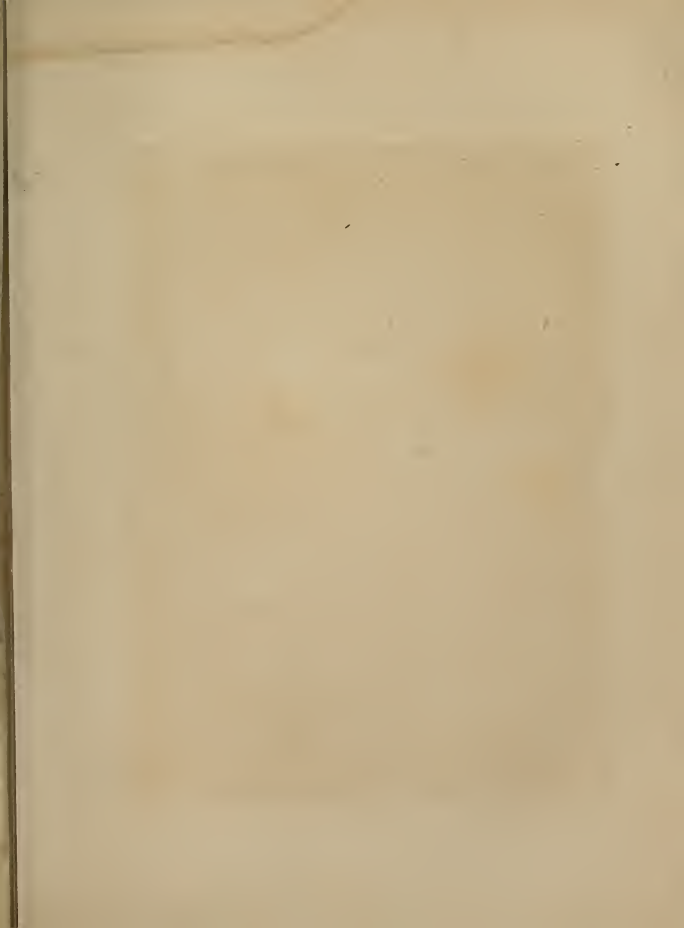
what he promised he fulfilled,—“The Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it.”

The temple was built for the worship of God. There he was worshipped according to the order which he delivered to his servant Moses.

The second temple was more wonderful, and far more greatly honoured than the first. Christ, the blessed Messiah, was actually present in the second temple. The Desire of all nations, the true Paschal Lamb, the Saviour of men, was present in the second temple.

The attachment of the Jews to the temple was ardent, superstitious, and idolatrous. The more wicked and hypocritical they became, their superstitious love became the more powerful. If a Jew was heard to say any thing against the temple, he was considered accursed, and worthy of death.

But this noble and sacred building was doomed to destruction. “And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple, and his disciples came unto him to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” What our Saviour foretold has actually taken place. The temple is no more! It served the end of its existence, and it is no more! That temple where Jesus was presented after his circumcision, where he afterwards preached, is no more!



THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

Matt XXV, ver. 1, 13



"The Bridegroom cometh"—is the cry ;
The foolish Virgins haste to buy
The oil their lamps require :—the wise
Prepar'd, at once, to greet him rise !

THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS.

MATT. XXV. 1—13. A. D. 33.

THE parable of the virgins, like all our Saviour's parables, shows his transcendent wisdom as the divine instructor of men. O with what simplicity, faithfulness, point, and solemnity, our blessed Lord delivered his instructions, and taught his lessons! "Holy Spirit, put us among the number of the disciples of Jesus, and may we learn lessons of salvation at his feet!"

In this parable our Saviour tells us that the kingdom of heaven is likened unto *ten virgins*. By the kingdom of heaven, we are to understand the visible church, which consists of *all* who profess the christian faith, and who profess to believe the gospel of the kingdom. Such professors are divided into two classes, and only two: they are distinguished as the wise and the foolish. "And five of them were wise, and five of them were foolish." By the *wise*, we are to understand real converts. They alone are truly wise: genuine grace, which is true wisdom, has taken possession of their heart. They are the disciples of the only wise God the Saviour. They are instructed in lessons of the highest wisdom. They have been taught to make the wisest choice—even Jesus, salvation, heaven, and immortal glory. They keep the wisest company. Their fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. O what a blessing! they are enabled to turn their back on the follies of the present world, to forsake the foolish, and live

and walk in the way of understanding. The wise virgins had oil in their lamps. By the lamps we are to understand the profession of the gospel, and by the oil the genuine grace with which the profession is accompanied. It is a state of true wisdom to have true grace. If we have honours, and dignities, and power, and wealth, and pleasures, if we have *not* the oil of grace, we are foolish. But if we are without all these, and have grace, we are wise.

The foolish virgins are described. They had lamps, but they had no oil. The lamp is of no use without oil. They had the lamp of a profession without the oil of grace. What folly ! They satisfied themselves with their empty lamps, and never thought of having them replenished with oil. What folly ! They were too late in finding out their folly. They found it out at last. If they had found it out in time, they might then have applied for oil, and have obtained it.

But they found out the fatal error of being without the oil of grace, when, alas ! the oil could not be obtained. "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet him." This is figurative of Christ coming to us at death. If at that solemn moment we are provided with the oil of grace, we are prepared to go out and meet the Bridegroom. When he came, the foolish virgins had no oil of grace, and therefore were not prepared to meet him. They wished admission into heaven, but the Bridegroom replied, "I know you not," and they were excluded for ever '

JUDAS BETRAYING CHRIST.

Luke XXII, ver. 4.



Tempted by the Evil one,
'Ere the hallow'd feast is done,
See the Traitor steals away;
That his Lord he may betray.



JUDAS BETRAYING CHRIST.

LUKE XXII. 4. A.D. 33.

JUDAS ISCARIOT betraying Christ, ranks among the blackest crimes that ever stained the character of fallen man. When we look at the whole case,—when we think of the matchless excellence of Christ, his gentleness, his meekness, his mercy—we are ready to ask, Is it possible that any man could be found so barbarous, so cruel, so infamous, as to betray such goodness, such loveliness? If it is granted that it is possible, the next question is, Where was such a monster to be found? Was he found among the malignant priests? No. Was he found among the infidel Sadducees, or among the cold-hearted and hypocritical Pharisees? No. Was he found among the very dregs of the people of Jerusalem, among thieves or robbers, or seditious men, or murderers? No, no, he was not found among them. Where then was he found? Be astonished, O ye heavens,—he was found among the twelve disciples of our Lord! He *was* one of the twelve. He held among them a superior office. He was treasurer—he carried the bag. He was considered superior to the other disciples in talent and management, and therefore most fit for the situation he filled as the treasurer of the little community.

All the Evangelists give an account of this black, this foul crime. All unite in handing down to future ages the name of Judas Iscariot—a name which will be

held in deserved abhorrence to all generations. Luke gives the following account of this most melancholy and humiliating event. "Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude."

Satan was active in this deed of infamy. He succeeds in entering into the heart of one of Christ's own disciples. He succeeds in persuading Judas to form the purpose of betraying his Master into the hands of his enemies. Judas was covetous. The love of money reigned in his heart. Satan placed before his covetous heart the prospect of being rewarded with silver or gold, if he would only betray Jesus into the hands of his enemies. How deliberately he follows up his purpose! He goes unasked to the chief priests, and informs them of his design. He most coolly negotiates with them *what* he was ready to do, and *for what*. As a man buys a piece of land, the price, the exact price is fixed. Promises on both sides are made. Judas departs, and waits his opportunity to perform an act of the basest treachery—an act which would bring upon himself the horrors of everlasting despair

Jesus knew that all this would take place, and foretold it to his disciples: "Behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. But woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!"



THE LAST SUPPER.

Luke XXII, ver. 17.



"Take this" the loving Saviour said,
And pour'd the wine, and broke the bread
And to his sad Disciples gave
His blessing, ere he sought the grave.

THE LAST SUPPER.

LUKE XXII. 17, &c. A.D. 33.

THE Passover was one of the sacraments of the Old Testament church. On that awful night, when the destroying angel entered into the houses of the Egyptians, and put their first-born to death, this same angel passed over the houses of the Israelities, and not one of them was put to death. The passover lamb was slain by the command of God. The blood of the lamb was sprinkled upon the door-posts of the Israelites. The angel *passed over*. Hence, the feast appointed to commemorate this event was called the *passover*.

The lamb which was slain was a type, or figure, of Jesus, the Lamb of God, our true passover Lamb, who was slain, and whose blood was shed to preserve, not merely Jews, but countless myriads of Gentiles, from the destroying sword of the wrath of offended Justice. As the Passover was appointed to keep up the remembrance of the deliverance from the destroying angel, so the sacrament of the Supper is appointed to keep up the remembrance of a far more wonderful deliverance, namely, the deliverance from the wrath of an offended God, by the shedding of the blood, and by the laying down of the life, of his only-begotten Son.

The Evangelist Luke thus records the first institution and the very first observance of the Sacrament of the

Supper :—" And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you : this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Observe, that the Lord's Supper was instituted immediately after the Passover had been eaten. The Passover was now to be for ever done away. The real Paschal Lamb is now come, and in a few days after he is to be put to death, and sacrificed upon the altar of the divine nature, to accomplish the salvation of countless millions. When the feast of the Passover closes, the feast of the Supper commences. The one dies, the other begins to live, and has continued ever since, and will continue till the last trumpet will sound in the skies. When the sun of the Old Testament Passover sets, the sun of the New Testament rises to shine till the morning of the resurrection of the just.

Consider the meaning of the sacramental elements. The bread is an emblem of the body of Christ, and of Christ in his person and blessings, as the bread of life, by which the soul is nourished, and fed, and strengthened, and lives for ever. The *broken* bread is an emblem of his body broken, and bruised, and mutilated, and slain. The wine is an emblem of the blood which he copiously shed for the remission of the sins of many.

All true believers, however tender their age, are commanded to observe this their duty and privilege. A loving Saviour says to all his people, "Do this in remembrance of me."





Girt with a towel, when he rose from meat,
Christ to his Followers taught this lesson true
If I, your Lord and Master, wash your feet,
So ye should learn to wash each others too!

JESUS WASHING THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES.

JOHN XIII. 4, &c. A.D. 33.

ONE put the following question to a celebrated ancient father of the church, "What is the principal grace?" He replied, "Humility." It was then asked, "What is the second grace?" He still answered, "Humility." The question was put again, "What is the third?" Still the same answer is given, "Humility." What a comely grace is humility! It is not only comely in itself, but increases the comeliness of all that is comely. Faith, love, and zeal, with all their comeliness, look still more comely when connected with the lustre of humility. It is, besides, one of the first lessons in which the believer is instructed in the school of Christ. Jesus says to each one, before entering the school, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and learn of me, who am meek and lowly of heart."

Though Christ's disciples were taken from the very humblest walks of life, it is remarkable to think how much their minds at one period were filled with pride, and how much they were influenced by carnal ambitious desires of worldly greatness, wealth, and power. They not only *all* wished to be great, but each one wished to be greater than another. Peter wished to be greater than John, and James wished to be greater than Peter. In due time, Christ in his goodness delivered them from all those carnal, worldly, sinful, and ambitious views. He taught them lessons of genuine

humility they never forgot, and which attended them all their days.

On one occasion, our Lord employed a very remarkable mean to convince his disciples of the sinfulness of pride, and to impress them with the excellence, and loveliness, and usefulness of humility. Without any previous intimation he rose from supper, he laid aside his outer garments, and took a towel, and girded himself. Jesus was now preparing to teach his disciples the blessed lesson of humility, while Judas was revolving in his dark and covetous bosom, the foul, and infernal purpose of betraying his Lord into the hands of those who had resolved to put him to death. How amazingly different the mind of the Saviour from the mind of the traitor!—the one an emblem of heaven, and the other an emblem of hell!

When Jesus girded himself, he poured water into a bason, and began to wash his disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. After he had washed all their feet, he proceeded, with the most affectionate meekness, to show the meaning of the instructive ceremony. He said, "If I then, your Lord and Master, wash your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither him that is sent greater than him that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Here we have incarnate divinity performing an act of humility to teach his people humility.

CHRIST'S AGONY.

LUKE XXII. 39, &c. A.D. 33

THE agony of our most blessed Lord, is, next to his death, the most affecting, and sorrowful, and gloomy part of our Saviour's life. O, in the garden of Gethsemane, he was, to an awfully solemn degree, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief! How applicable the words of the weeping Jeremiah to our Saviour's case, when he lay stretched upon the ground, and his sacred body covered with bloody sweat, through the dreadful vehemence and intensity of his sorrow, Lam. i. 12. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger!"

It was in a garden, and in the garden of Gethsemane, where our Saviour endured unparalleled degrees of agony. It was in a garden man fell, and forfeited the favours of God, and exposed himself to the wrath of offended justice. And it was in a garden, Jesus endured an agony of wrath, to remove that curse which man merited by his fall. He did not wish all his disciples to be the witnesses of his agony. He made choice of Peter, James, and John. They had seen his glory on the mount of Transfiguration; that glory which was the emblem of the glory he should receive as his rich reward, when all his sufferings should come to an end. They were on this account better qualified than the

other disciples, to be the witnesses of his grief. After a little while, he began to be sorrowful and very heavy. The Father, as a God offended with our transgressions, now began in a most remarkable manner to withdraw from the humanity of his only-begotten Son the sensible manifestation of his love. When the humanity of Christ looked upon the face of his Father, he saw no smile, but beheld those dreadful frowns, which filled him with unutterable anguish. So vehement was the grief, that the body itself began to be heavy and sink under the pressure of the alarming weight. Then saith Jesus to his disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me." Then he betakes himself to prayer. And O what a relief is prayer, and intercourse with God, in the hour of anguish and sorrow! He fell prostrate on his face, "and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Humanity recoils at the prospect of drinking such a cup, and drinking it to the dregs. *If it be possible, let this cup pass from me!* was the expression of overwhelming grief. Jesus was so troubled, that he knew not what to say. Yet see his complete submission—"Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

So dreadful was this agony, that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground!" O see in these great drops of blood, Christ's great love to men, and the greatness of that salvation he has obtained for men!

JESUS APPREHENDED.
John XVIII, ver. 1, 8.



When the Band by Judas brought,
Answer'd that they Jesus sought
"I am He," the Saviour said



JESUS APPREHENDED.

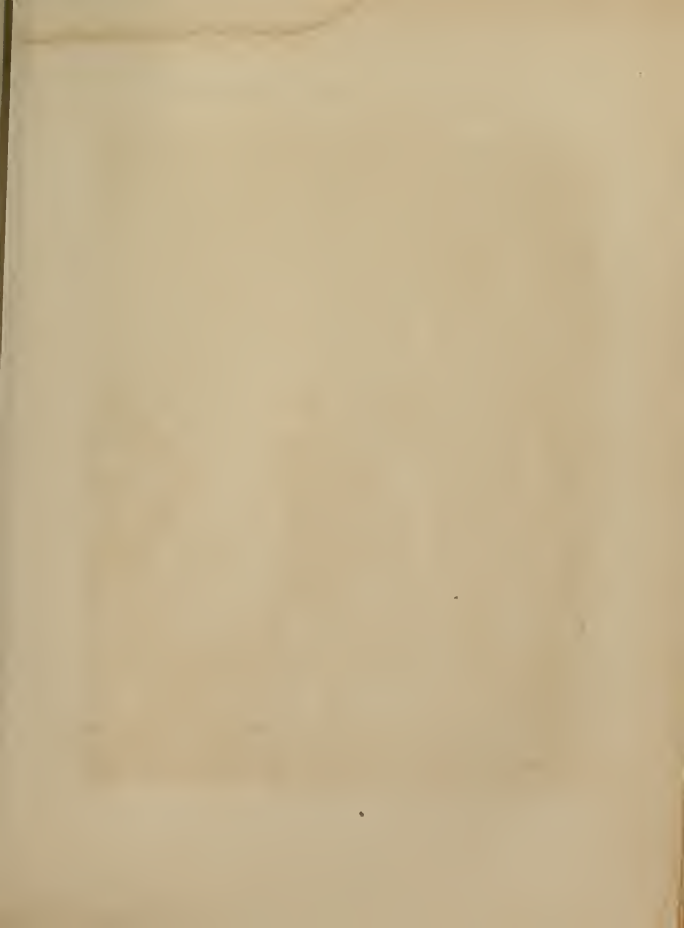
JOHN XVIII. 1—8. A.D. 33.

AFTER our Lord had offered up the intercessory prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St. John, he proceeded to the vicinity of the place where he was to enter into the hottest conflict of his sufferings. His time is *now* come. He does not therefore keep out of the way, to escape his sufferings; and he does nothing to delay his sufferings. His time is come, and he therefore goes out to meet them. O with what an impulse of love he was actuated! He longed to complete the purchase of salvation. He longed to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to bring in an everlasting righteousness. He longed to glorify, in the very fullest degree, the perfections of the Godhead, which had been dishonoured by the fall and the guilt of man.

It was on these accounts our Saviour deliberately went forth over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into which he entered with his disciples. Judas, the base traitor, knew this favoured spot, where our Saviour often resorted. Now Jesus had drunk a cup of wrath presented by the hand of offended justice. Immediately after, he is to endure sufferings at the hands of men, and by them to be most cruelly crucified and slain.

Judas has already received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees. He appears as the captain of midnight murderers. They came under his direction to the place where our Saviour was, and where he was prepared to meet them. They came with lanterns, and torches, and weapons. They came as if to meet one who would make a desperate resistance. They came out to meet one who could have instantly sunk them into the lowest hell. Jesus said to them, "Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them." Oh, humiliating sight! The man who *had been* the disciple of Jesus, and treasurer to the little community, standing at the very front of these murderers, to assist in hastening the accursed death of Immanuel. Oh, humiliating sight! As soon as Jesus said unto them, "I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground." They were overcome by the power of a present Deity; still, however, when they rose up, their hearts were as cruel and relentless as ever. Jesus makes no effort to escape—he commits himself into their hands and power. "Then the band and the captain, and the officers of the Jews, bound him." There was no necessity to bind him. His surrender was voluntary. He was willing to be led; he would not be driven or dragged. He was fully ready to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, he would not have opened his mouth.

How we should love such a Saviour!



PETER DENYING CHRIST.

Luke XXII, ver. 55, 62.



"Though they all forsake Thee, I
Never will," was Peter's cry;
Yet, with oaths and curses, he
Thrice deny'd Him openly!

PETER DENYING CHRIST.

LUKE XXII. 55—62. A.D. 33

THE Holy Spirit is faithful in recording upon the pages of the inspired volume the faults and falls of the most eminent saints. Remember Aaron, and the golden calf; Moses, who smote the rock thrice under the influence of sinful anger; David, and the crimes of adultery and murder; and Peter, who denied his Lord with blasphemy and oaths. These great and good men fell, to show that they were *only* men; to show that even when men of great piety withdraw their dependence from God, they cannot stand, they must fall. These sins are recorded, not to encourage us to sin, but as beacons to warn us against sin. May the Holy Spirit bless to the young our meditations on the melancholy and affecting fall of Peter in denying his Lord!

Peter very rashly and ungenerously said, "Though all shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." This was *rash*, for he resolved in his own strength. This was *ungenerous*, for it would appear that when he said, "Though *all* shall be offended," he included in the *all*, the other disciples. O what must have been the astonishment of Peter, when the Saviour uttered the following prediction, which, alas, proved lamentably true, and was very soon accomplished after it was delivered! It was this: "Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the

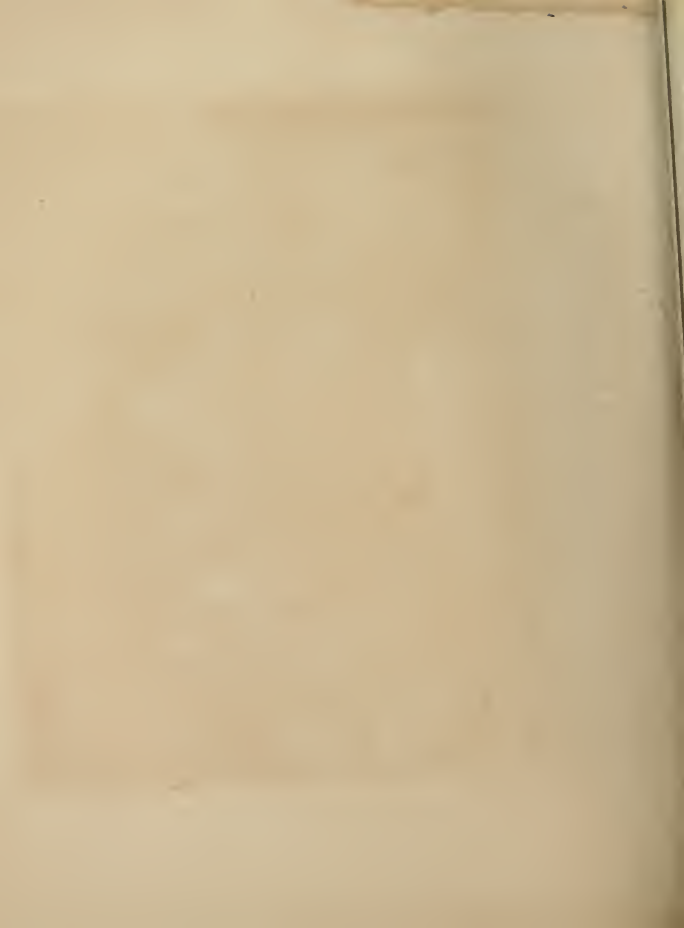
cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Peter, still relying on himself, and confident of his own strength, said, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." Soon we find the prediction of our Lord fulfilled, and soon we find Peter's resolutions disappear before the breath of temptation.

Peter followed Jesus to the judgment-hall of the High Priest. He then thought himself a brave man, to have gone so far, while all the disciples, except John and himself, had failed in their courage, and had literally fled panic-struck. Certainly his presence in the hall looked well, and furnished some hope that he would hold out to the end. "A certain maid beheld him while he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him." In one moment, his resolution fled. In one moment his graces were suspended—they were asleep in his bosom. In one moment, his spiritual courage and vigour left him. He became weak as a child. He was like Samson shorn of his locks. A deadly coldness passed over and through his soul. "And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while, another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilean. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly!"

JUDAS THROWING DOWN THE MONEY.
Rev. XVII. ver. 3. 10.



Filled with remorse, the Traitor said,
The guiltless blood I have betray'd;
And straight, though Priests and Elders frown'd,
He cast the silver on the ground!

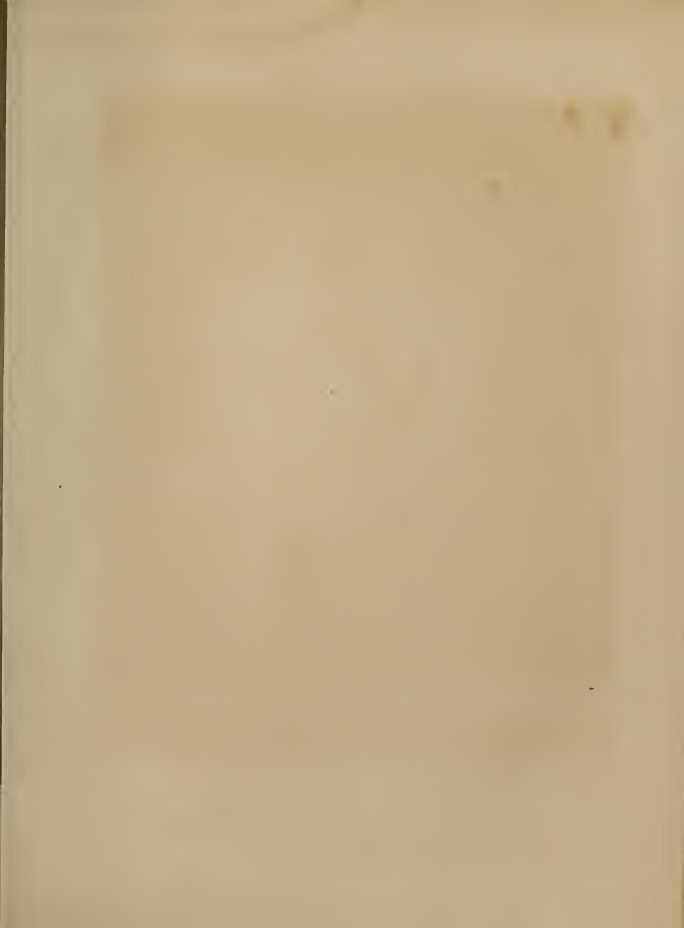


JUDAS THROWING DOWN THE MONEY.

MATT. XXVII. 3—10. A.D. 33.

THE minds of some are in a very hardened state, when they commit certain crimes. To lay the plan of murder requires the mind to be in a very hardened, unfeeling state. This was exactly the case with Judas Iscariot. His mind became as hard as adamant when Satan entered him. When Jesus told him to his face, that he was the man, he continued as unfeeling as the dead. When he headed the murderers, and pointed out Jesus, and went forward and dared to betray the Son of Man with a kiss, his insensibility continued. When he saw Jesus led away bound like a malefactor, his hardened insensibility still continued. This morose, gloomy, hardened state of mind remained, while Jesus was taken before the High Priest, and while he was taken before Herod, and when he was taken before Pilate. It continued during the mock trial; and it continued till the sentence of condemnation was passed. Then, and not till then, did the slumbering conscience of Judas awake. Then, that conscience, which up to that period resembled a lake of ice, now resembles a burning fiery furnace, sending forth sulphureous, agonizing flames, which formed,—O dreadful thought!—the beginning of that hell, where he was doomed to endure for ever the fierceness of divine indignation for his atrocious and unparalleled crime.

“Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders.” The moment he found Jesus was condemned, his conscience, which had been till that time asleep, awoke against him like a roaring and devouring lion. It would appear that Judas did not expect that Jesus would be condemned. Some think that Judas believed Jesus, by a miracle, would have delivered himself out of the hand of his enemies. In this, however, he was egregiously mistaken, for the hour of Christ’s death was now come, and literally brought to pass, by *his* base and unfeeling treachery. Then he repented. He saw what he had done. He saw that the guilt of his crime was more lofty than the mountains. He saw that he had exposed himself to the righteous anger and unrelenting wrath of Heaven. He said, “I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” The chief priests and elders, more hardened than himself, replied, “What is that to us? see thou to that.” He found it impossible to retain any longer in his possession the wages of unrighteousness; and he departed and “cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and hanged himself.” Ah, dreadful end! He ascended a tree, and suspended himself to one of its branches, “and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and his bowels gushed out.” Ah, dreadful death! He had no bowels of affection for Jesus, and his own gushed out!



MOCKING JESUS.

Matt. XXVII. ver. 29, 31.



For Sceptre in his hands a Reed they place,
And round his brows they bind the piercing thorn;
And while his sufferings in his looks they trace,
Hail, King! they cry, in mock'ry and in scorn.

MOCKING JESUS.

[MATT. XXVII. 29—31. A.D. 33.]

MORE than a thousand years before the birth and appearance of the humanity of our Lord, David foretold the cruel mockings which he should receive from wicked men. He thus speaks of himself as a prophetic type of the Son of God, (Psalm xxii. 6—8,) "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." Psalm cix. 25, "I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads." Equally remarkable and minute are the predictions of Isaiah upon the same subject. Isa. liii. 3, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Having looked at the predictions which foretold our Saviour's mockings, we may now consider the very painful account which is given by Matthew of the fulfilment of these melancholy predictions. First, they stripped him of his outer garment, and put on him a scarlet robe. They did this in mockery and contempt of him as a king. They would not allow his claim as king of the Jews. To this honour he was entitled by his royal descent in David's line. And they would not

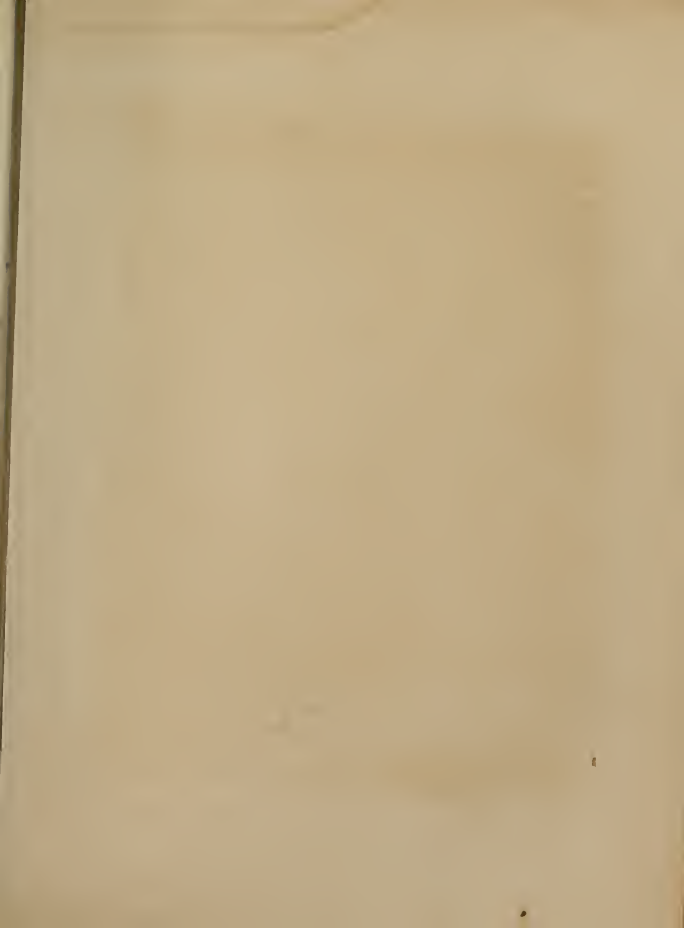
allow his claim to kingly sovereignty as the Son of God, even though he proved by his miracles that he was the Son of God, and possessed of the glorious perfections of Jehovah.

Secondly, they platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head. O infernal, cruel device! They could not be satisfied by merely putting on him a mock-crown, but they must make the crown of *thorns*. This they pressed upon his sacred temples, and caused the blood to run down his cheeks. What a change! that head which was once crowned with thorns, now wears the most glorious crown in the universe. A diadem of suns is darkness, when compared with the inconceivable brightness of Christ's glorious crown.

Thirdly, they put a reed in his hand, the emblem of weakness and degradation. O how soon after that hand received from the Father, in the presence of innumerable angels, a mediatorial sceptre of universal empire.

Then they bowed the knee before him, and commenced the artillery of their mockery and abuse. What shame will fill the hearts of these men at the last day, if they have died without repentance and forgiveness! Then they shall be compelled to bow the knee before him, and acknowledge his divine and mediatorial greatness, dignity and sovereignty.

They added words to deeds. They said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" As if they had said, "Contemptible man, art thou a king? No, thou shalt never fill a throne. We will not have thee to reign over us!" Then they spit upon him, and smote him on the head.



CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS.

John XIX. ver 17



With trembling step, with clos'd and weary eye,
Oppress'd by deep and agonizing cares;
For us, and our salvation doom'd to die;
To Calvary's mount his Cross the Saviour bears!

CHRIST BEARING THE CROSS.

JOHN XIX. 17. A. D. 33.

THE holy Evangelist John presents us with the following account of Jesus bearing his cross. The words are few, but are calculated to make a deep impression upon the believing, loving heart of the true christian. He says, "Then he delivered him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him away. And he, bearing his cross, went forth unto a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha."

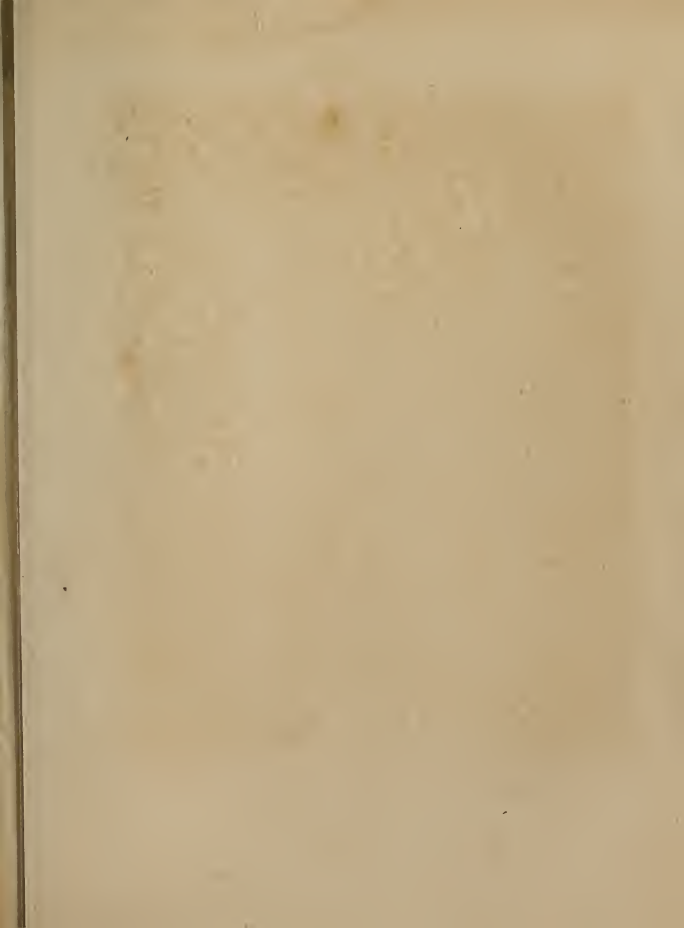
The conduct of the Jews to Jesus was the very perfection of the most malignant cruelty. It was to add both to the misery and degradation of Christ they obliged him to carry his cross. The death of the cross was considered the most infamous, and it was rendered more infamous by compelling the malefactor to carry his own cross. There was no public cross fixed and kept in one place, for one criminal after another being crucified. There was a separate cross for each separate criminal, and therefore in many cases they were obliged to carry their own cross.

Our Saviour carried his cross part of the way, along the streets of Jerusalem, to Calvary. At last his feeble body was so exhausted, as to be able to carry it no farther. On this account they compelled one Simon, a Cyrenian, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. If Simon was ever afterwards

converted, he must have considered himself unspeakably honoured in being employed to carry that cross on which salvation was accomplished, and where the most wonderful event took place, that the eyes of men or of angels ever witnessed.

Christ's carrying his cross may be considered as a part of his sufferings. It was a long, thick piece of timber. Some think it was neither seasoned, nor hewn, nor smooth. We must also consider that the body of our Lord was tender, weak, emaciated, and not accustomed to such burdens. At this time, too, his shoulders were sore with stripes and cruel scourgings. Every step he took, while bearing such a load, must have greatly added to his bodily pain. O with what patience he bore all this, while it was only the beginning of his more severe sufferings! Our Saviour bearing his cross answered to the type, namely, Isaac, who bore the wood, with which to all appearance he was to be burned. Our Saviour bearing his cross was also very significant of the nature of his undertaking. The Father laid upon him the iniquity of us all. What reason have believers to say, in the language of the prophet, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

Christ bearing his cross, is a lesson of instruction to us. Thus he teaches all his disciples to take up their cross and follow him. Whatever cross we are called to bear, let us remember that he first bore a cross for us.



THE CRUCIFIXION.

John XIX. ver. 15.



Darkness o'er the Earth was spread,
When the Saviour bowed his head;
And amidst his sufferings cried,
"It is finish'd"-as he died!

THE CRUCIFIXION.

JOHN XIX. 15, &c. A.D. 33.

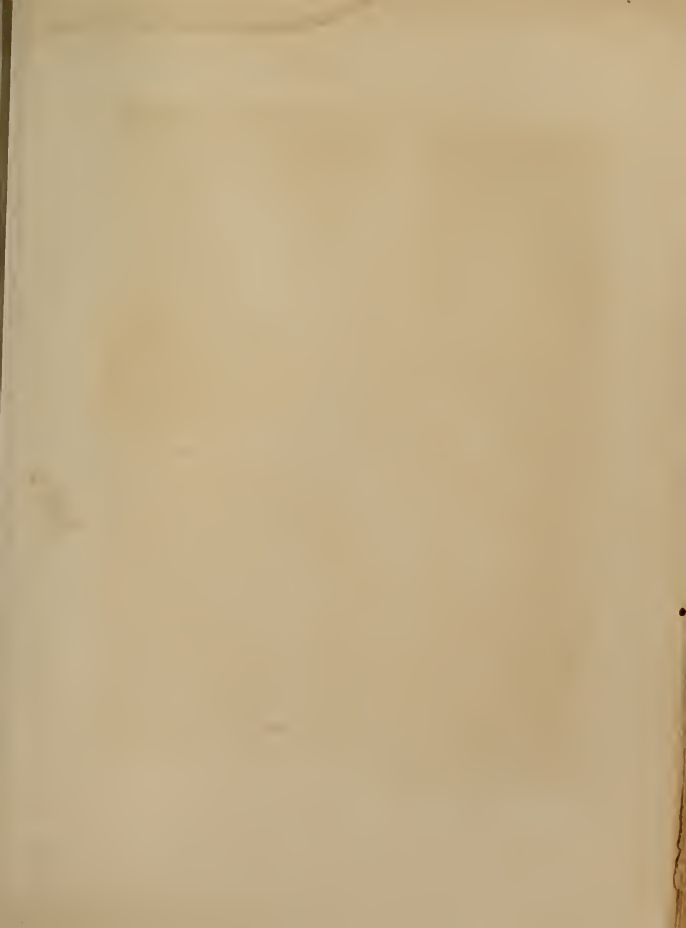
THE Son of God clothed with human nature died, and he died upon a cross. We cannot conceive a more cruel, a more shameful, a more painful death, than the death of crucifixion. The cross was first laid lengthways on the ground. The poor wretched malefactor was stripped of his garments, which were divided among the executioners. Then he was placed upon his back upon the cross, and (affecting to relate!) nails of large size were most violently thrust through his hands and feet, fixing them to the wood! A hole was dug in the ground. The cross and malefactor together were lifted up by the official attendants, and the lower part of the cross was thrust with violence into the open space prepared to receive it. There it was made secure, and continued till the poor sufferer expired in the midst of the most tormenting agony! Young readers, this was the death to which Christ submitted for sinners. This was the death which he died for you,—yes—for you!

It was foretold in the Old Testament, that our Saviour should die this death,—this cruel, this shameful death. - Psalm xxii. 16—18, “For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.” Zech. xii. 10, “And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as

one mourneth for his only son." O how literally the predictions were fulfilled!

The chief priests rejected Jesus as their king. They cried out with hellish violence, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him, crucify him." True,—he came to *his own*, but they would not receive him. He came to his own, and they laid hold on him as a thief, or a murderer. He came to his own, and they suffered him not to live—they put him to death. Pilate, in opposition to the dictates of his conscience, and perfectly satisfied of the spotless innocence of Jesus, gave him up into the hands of his enemies. They led him along the crowded streets of Jerusalem, amid the hootings, and hisses, and yellings of an infuriated multitude, vociferating as they passed along, "Crucify him, crucify him, away with him, away with him." They led him without the gate to Calvary. They brought him to Golgotha, the place of a skull. There they went through the awful process of nailing the blessed, blessed Saviour to the cross. While the soldiers were thrusting the nails through his hands and feet, as if forgetful of his own agonies, he thus prayed for their salvation, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It is probable Jesus was nailed to the cross about nine o'clock in the morning; and about the ninth Jewish hour, that is, three in the afternoon, he expired.

O Jesus, thy death is our life!



THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

Matt. XXVII, ver. 57, 59.



See with what a mournful air,
From the cross their Lord they bear;
But their sorrows soon shall cease,
He shall rise and give them peace.

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

MATT. XXVII. 57—59. A.D. 33.

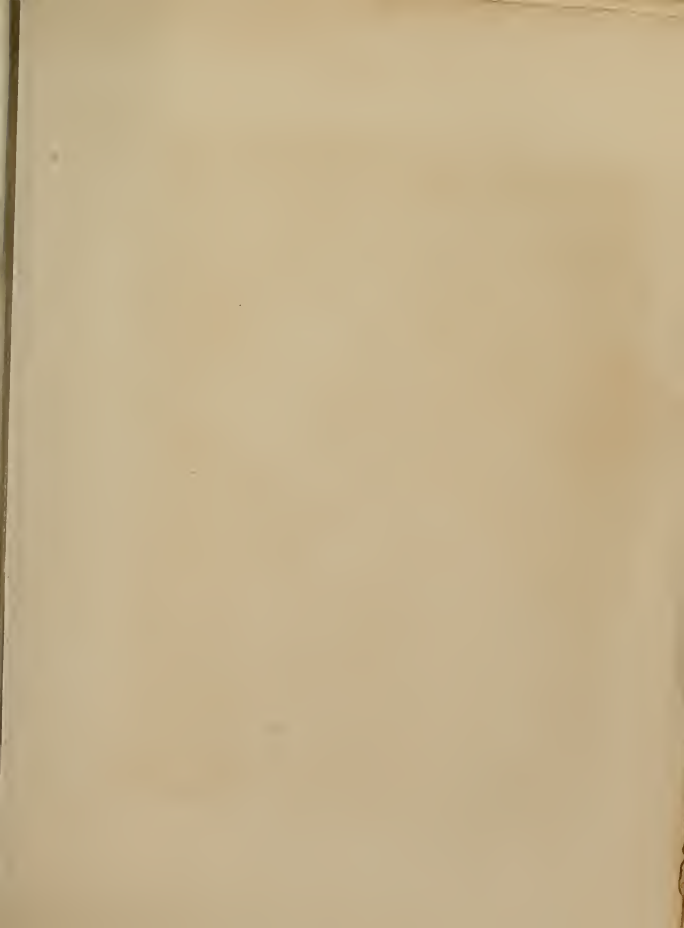
THE death of Jesus was accompanied with several most extraordinary circumstances and events. The sun was darkened. This darkness continued from the sixth till the ninth hour, that is, from noon till three o'clock in the afternoon. The darkness was most dense, It was an awful darkness. It extended beyond Judea, even to distant lands. Philosophers observed it, and wondered. One said on the occasion, "Either the end of the world is come, or the God of nature is expiring." The Sun of Righteousness was eclipsed by death, and the natural sun, as ashamed and confounded, refused to shine. Hardened men would not put on raiment of mourning when the humanity of the Son of God expired, but the sky put on the covering of impenetrable darkness.

When the veil of Christ's humanity was rent, the veil of the temple was rent in twain. This was a texture of cloth, long, wide, and more than an inch in thickness. It was suspended from the ceiling to the floor of the temple. It separated the holy place from the holy of holies. The rending of this veil showed that by the death of Christ, the Old Testament dispensation, or the Levitical mode of worship, was now brought to an end, and should be no longer required. At the death of Christ, few were found to rend their garments, as a token of their

grief; but inanimate creation seemed, as it were, to feel for the suffering Saviour. "The earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened." Graves, which were digged out of the rock, and contained the dead bodies of departed saints, were torn open by the earthquake, as if to deliver up their inhabitants.

It was a practice to break the legs of malefactors who were crucified, to hasten their death, and to put an end to their agonies. The legs of the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus were broken; but when the executioners came to Jesus to break his legs, they found he was dead already—they brake not his legs. "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. For these things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."

It is truly affecting, the loving and respectful way in which the lifeless body of our Lord was taken down from the cross. God stirred up Joseph of Arimathea to perform this most solemn and important office. "And after this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came, therefore, and took the body of Jesus." All his foolish fear left him. He is now filled with holy boldness, and goes to the very governor himself, at the hazard of his life, and begs, and obtains the body of Jesus, which he most respectfully takes from the cross.





With a true and tender care,
Wrapt in linen fine and fair,
In the tomb their Lord they lay
Soon to break its bands away!

THE ENTOMBING OF CHRIST'S BODY.

MARK XV. 45—47. A.D. 33.

THERE never was such a funeral, and there never shall be, nor can be such a funeral, as the funeral of the lifeless body of the Son of God. All the kings of the earth buried at once, would have been nothing compared with this. The burial of all the race of men, consisting of more than eight hundred millions of human beings, would be nothing compared with this. If all the angels were incarnate, and their bodies interred in one grave, it would be nothing compared with the interment of the body of Immanuel, God with us. How very interesting are the particulars connected with the entombing of our Lord! He was not buried in the place where those who were crucified were commonly interred. Joseph, an honourable councillor, begged the body from Pilate, and his petition was most favourably and speedily answered. If the chief priests had been before Joseph, and asked the body, to have dragged it with indignity along the streets of Jerusalem, it is very probable their wishes would have been gratified. Providence graciously prevented this shocking outrage.

Joseph of Arimathea presided at the burial of Jesus. Love the most fervent animated him in all he did. He bought linen as a shroud for Christ's lifeless body. It was not common linen—it was *fine* linen, and likely the *finest* Jerusalem could furnish. O how infinitely worthy of the *finest* linen, the lifeless body of

Jesus, who died to prepare for us a robe of righteousness of glorious beauty; and garments whiter than the snow, and brighter than the sun, for our souls, in the heaven of heavens.

Joseph took down the body from the cross. At the same time came Nicodemus with a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pounds weight. "And they took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury." John xix. 39, 40.

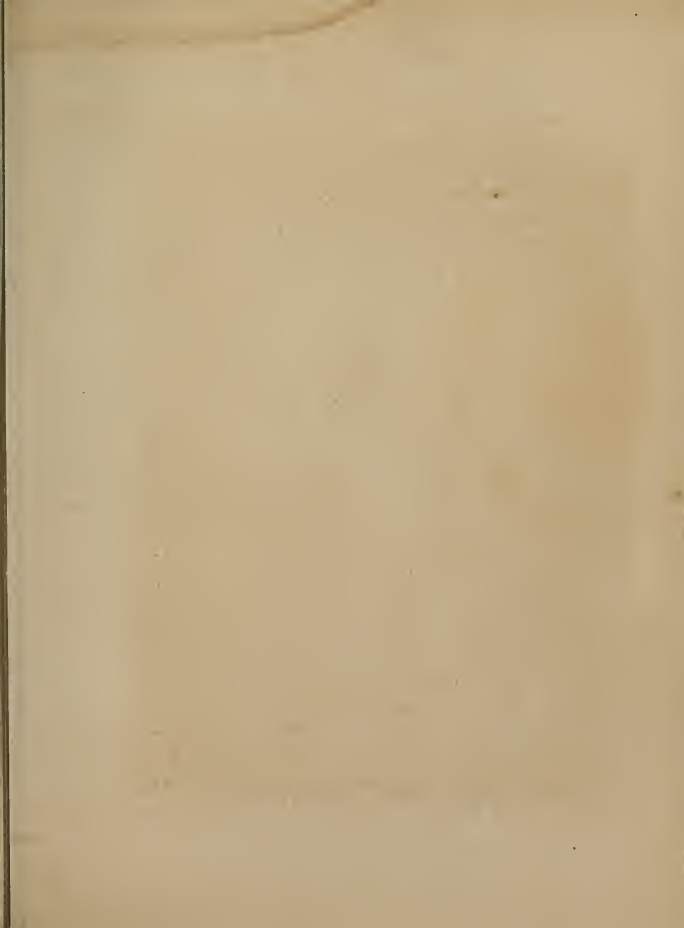
Joseph laid the body in his own grave. Jesus was upon the throne of his heart; and he now places, with the utmost tenderness and respect, the body of his Lord in his own grave. Keen and acute must have been the feelings of Joseph and Nicodemus, when they assisted in conveying the corpse of their Saviour to the silent tomb! The honour conferred on Joseph was unspeakably great, in having the power and desire to bury Jesus in *his own grave!*

The grave was hewn out of the rock. This intimated that Jesus died to be the refuge of his people. He is the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Let each one pray,

"Rock of ages, shelter me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

No man was ever laid in the sepulchre before, to show there could be no mistake when Jesus rose, that it was really himself, and none else.

Pious women came to witness the place where the Lord lay. Jesus was dear to them in life, and in death.



THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

Matt XVIII, ver 2.



From the tomb the Saviour rose,
Victor o'er his mighty foes;
While the keepers shook with fright,
Dazzled by his glorious light.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

MATT. XXVIII. 2. A. D. 33.

“ Bless'd morning, whose young dawning rays
Beheld our rising God ;
And saw him triumph o'er the dust,
And leave his dark abode.”

THERE is something very worthy of notice in the *time* in which our Saviour rose : it was on the third day after his death. He was in his grave on three distinct days—the Friday, the Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath), and on the first day of the week, which is the christian Sabbath, to continue till time shall be no more. On the sixth day, Christ finished his great work of salvation ; on the seventh day, he rested from his work in the grave ; and on the first day, he entered upon a new work.

The resurrection of Christ was preceded by an earthquake. One well remarks, “ When Jesus died, the earth shook for fear, and when he rose, it leaped for joy. This earthquake was the signal that the bands of death were burst asunder ; and also, that Jesus, the mighty conqueror, had obtained a glorious victory over the grave. Then was fulfilled this prophecy, ‘ O death, I will be thy plagues, O grave, I will be thy destruction ; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.’ ”

On this great and august occasion, an angel descended from heaven ; he came to the door of the sepulchre,

as the messenger of divine justice, to show that satisfaction was given to all its demands, by the sufferings and death of Christ. He came to roll the stone away from the door of the prison of the grave, that the illustrious prisoner, having paid the debt of our sins, might be set free, with all his richly merited honours.

When the angel rolled back the stone, he sat upon it. There he sat, showing the completeness of Christ's triumph. There he sat, defying all Christ's enemies. There he sat, confounding all Christ's foes with the lustre of his glory.

His appearance is described. His appearance was like the lightning, and his raiment was white as snow. The visible glory of this angel, was an emblem of the glorious dignity to which our Saviour rose, when he ascended from the gloomy mansions of the dead. How striking! when Jesus died the heavens were covered with the darkness of deep mourning; but when Jesus rose from the grave, the heavens send down an angel to his tomb, with raiment shining like the glory of the sun. May we now sing,

“ Hosannah to the Prince of light,
That cloth'd himself in clay;
Enter'd the iron gates of death,
And tore the bars away.

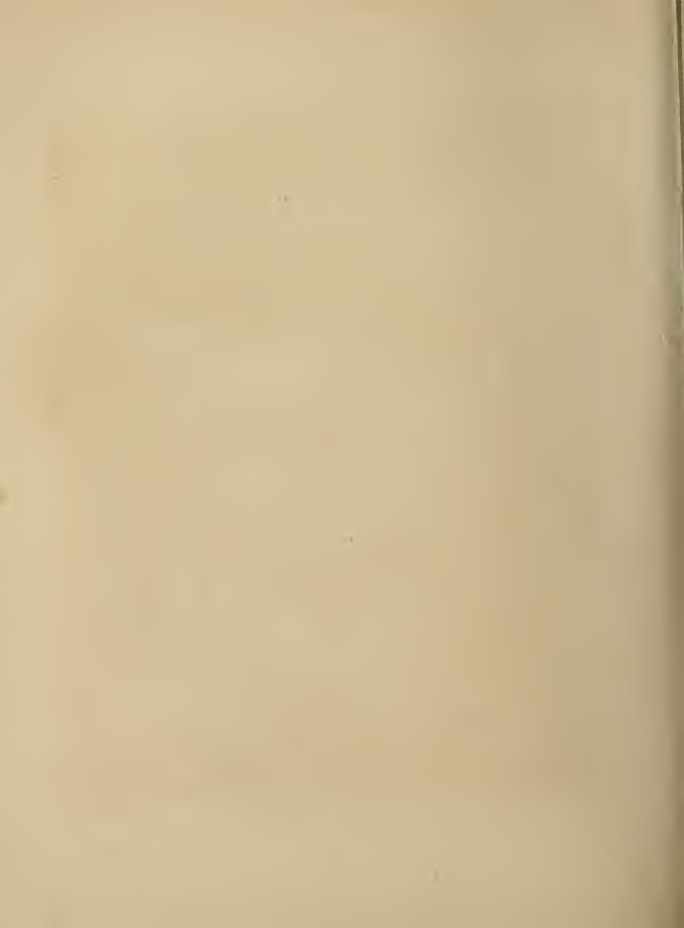
“ Death is no more the king of dread,
Since our Immanuel rose;
He took the tyrant's sting away,
And spoil'd our hellish foes.”

THE MARYS AT THE SEPULCHRE.

Mark xvi, ver. 1.



Why linger ye here, the Angel said;
Seek ye the living among the dead?
From the bands of death he has set him free,



THE MARYS AT THE SEPULCHRE.

MARK XVI. 1. A. D. 33.

WE have an account of a most interesting and pious visit, which some holy women made to the sepulchre of Christ. They were both Marys. The one was Mary Magdalene, who was, without exception, the greatest prodigy of saving grace. Once she was possessed of seven devils. Almighty grace expelled them from her bosom, and divine grace entered, and made her soul a temple of the Holy Ghost. The other Mary was the mother of James and Salome.

It was on the Sabbath, and very early in the morning, they came to the grave of Jesus. This teaches us to pay early visits to our Lord. He is infinitely worthy of the morning of every day, and infinitely worthy of the morning of our lives. Ye, who are young, give Jesus the morning of your lives. He has said for your encouragement, "They that seek me early shall find me."

The Marys took spices with them. They went to Christ's grave, not only to bedew his body with their tears, but to anoint it with their spices. A difficulty presents itself before them. Before reaching the sepulchre, they remembered there was a heavy stone laid upon its mouth. They were unable of themselves to remove it. They had great strength of love, but little strength of body. "And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" When they came out, they had no thought

of this difficulty. But on their arrival at the sacred spot, they found all difficulties removed. They found the stone rolled away, the grave empty ; they saw an angel from heaven, who informed them that Jesus had risen from the grave, the conqueror of death, to die no more. They found the grave was opened. They entered in. This shows it was an apartment of considerable size. When they looked in, they saw the grave was empty—the body of Jesus was not there. This discovery at first must have overwhelmed their minds with anguish. They must at once have concluded that the grave was robbed. They must have supposed that some cruel, rapacious hand had violated the sanctity of the tomb, and sacrilegiously removed Christ's lifeless body from its resting-place. Soon their fears were dispelled : they soon found the dead Saviour was become a living Redeemer.

They saw a young man sitting on the right side of the sepulchre. It was an angel, provided with a bodily form, having the glowing appearance of youth, and intimating the eternal youth, vigour, activity, and loveliness of those happy spirits. He was clothed in a long white garment, an emblem both of his dignity and purity. When they saw him, they were greatly afraid. But soon the cause of their terror became the source of their confidence and joy. “ And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted : ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified : he is risen, he is not here ; behold the place where they laid him ! ”

O may we resemble these Marys in love to Jesus !

THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.



Adorn'd with pomp and costly state ,
While prostrate Pilgrims near it wait ;
And count their beads , and shed their tears ,
The sacred Sepulchre appears !



THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

JOHN XIX. 41. A. D. 33.

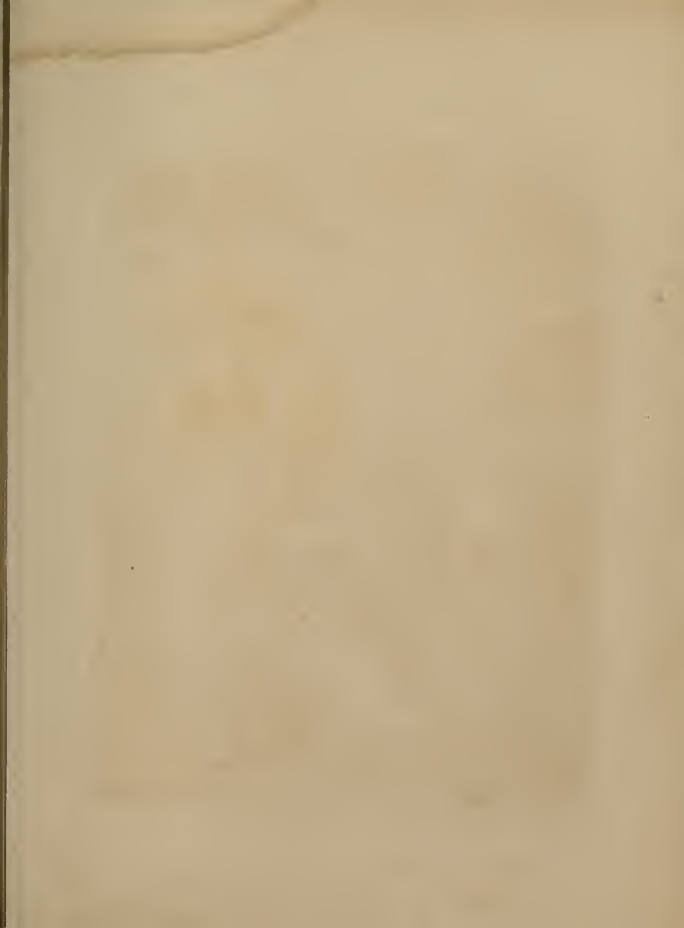
ON the evening of Friday, the body of Jesus was taken from the cross and laid in the grave. This was a part of the humiliation of Christ to which it was necessary he should submit. He *died* as the surety of his people, and he was *buried* as the surety of his people. The grave was dug out of the rock; it was capacious, so that several individuals might enter it at the same time. It was a new tomb, wherein no man was ever laid before. This was necessary, to show that it was Jesus who rose from that grave, and no one else. This grave was in a garden, to remind us that in a garden, our first covenant-head exposed himself and all his descendants to death in all its forms, and in all its miseries. This grave was the property of another, to show how completely our Saviour became poor, that we, through his poverty, might become rich.

Modern travellers give us the following information respecting the holy sepulchre:—There is a church at Jerusalem built upon the spot which is believed to have been the identical place where the body of Jesus was entombed. This church is called “The Church of the Holy Sepulchre.” The tomb here exhibited has been considered for fifteen hundred years at least as the actual tomb which contained the body of the

Redeemer of men. The foundation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre dates as far back as the age of Constantine, the first Roman emperor who openly acknowledged the christian faith. Here the Crusaders shed streams of blood in attempting to deliver what they believed to be the tomb of Jesus out of the hands of the infidels.

If the sepulchre pointed out as the tomb of Christ, be the real sepulchre, great outward changes have taken place since the lapse of so many generations and ages, from the time the great Redeemer rose triumphant from the dead. A block of polished marble is shown, on which it is supposed the angel sat when he spoke to the two Marys. So narrow is the entrance into the sepulchre, that no one can pass except in a bending posture. The interior is a small closet, rather more than six feet square, and about eight in height. A considerable portion is occupied with a large stone, on which it is supposed the body of Jesus was laid. This is encased in bluish-white marble, to protect it from pilgrims who might break off portions for relics. The sarcophagus is constantly strewed with flowers and bedewed with rose-water, and over it are suspended several silver lamps, constantly burning, the gifts of different kings.

The sepulchre is above ground, and not a subterraneous tomb, as it originally was. Shaw, like others, accounts for this by observing, that all the surrounding rocks were cut away, to form the level for the church thus making it a grotto above ground.



CHRIST APPEARING TO MARY.

John XX ver. 15.



"Sir," to the Gardener Mary said
O tell me where my Lord is laid:
But when the Saviour's voice she heard,
"Rabboni!" was her joyful word!

CHRIST APPEARING TO MARY.

JOHN XX. 15, &c. A.D. 33.

THE first individual to whom our Saviour appeared after his resurrection, was a woman and not a man. That woman was *a Mary*, but not the Virgin Mary. If God's ways had been as our ways, Jesus would have first appeared to Mary, his own mother after the flesh. By an act of gracious sovereignty, he conferred this great and distinguished honour upon Mary Magdalene, who, from being the worst of women, was raised up to be the most eminent of saints.

Her love to Christ was particularly fervent and constant. When Peter and John had left the grave, she stayed at the sepulchre, and she wept, and looked into it with the most anxious concern. O, what a blessed discovery awaited her! She neither wept in vain, nor waited in vain.

She saw two angels, the servants of her Lord, and the comforters of his saints. Seeing her bathed in tears, they said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She replies, with great simplicity and affection, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

While conversing with the angels, the Lord of angels appeared to her. She sought her absent Lord, and she found him whom her soul loved. She sought the lifeless body of Jesus, and she found more than she sought, more than she expected; she found a living Saviour. Turning herself round, she saw Jesus stand-

ing, and knew not it was Jesus. "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" *Why weepest thou?* was probably the first word our Saviour spoke after his resurrection. As if he had said, "I am risen, dry up your tears; my resurrection is a fountain of joy and consolation to my people for ever and ever." How delightful! as soon as Jesus rises from the grave, he begins to comfort his weeping saints. And how remarkable, the first he begins to comfort is a *weeping Magdalene*.

Mary, supposing that he who addressed her was the gardener, who had the charge of the garden, where the grave was situated, saith unto him, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Mary, in the greatness of her anxiety, and in the ardent workings of her love, scarcely knew what she said.

The tender-hearted Saviour holds her in suspense no longer. As Joseph at length said unto his brethren, *I am Joseph*, so Jesus at length, by a most pleasing surprise, made himself known to Mary. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary." At once she remembered the tones and the sound of her Saviour's voice. For her Saviour exactly pronounced her name in the way she was accustomed to hear it from his kind and spotless lips. O, what joy must now have thrilled through all her soul, when she saw standing before her, that object of her most endearing affection, whom a few hours before she saw a lifeless corpse on Calvary's cross. She exclaimed, "Rabboni," that is, My dear Master!





While from Jesus's lips they learn,
 Wisdom's words of truth sincere;
 How their hearts within them burn,
 Though their tongues may seem to be dumb.

DISCIPLES AT EMMAUS

LUKE XXIV. 13—35. A. D. 33.

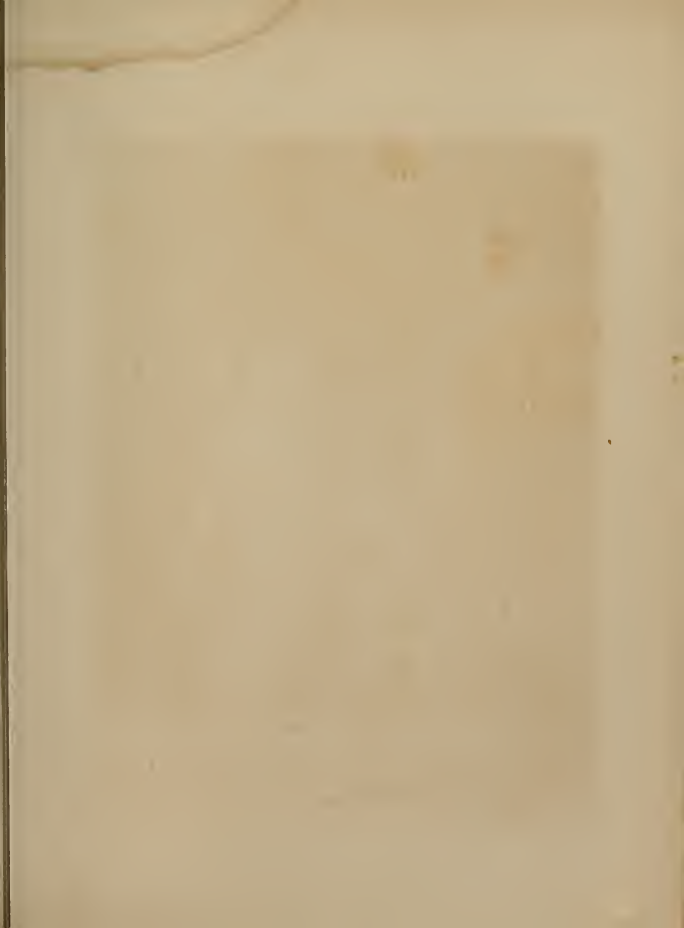
OUR Saviour appeared unto two of his disciples, going to Emmaus; and it is supposed he made this appearance on the very day he rose from the dead. Thus our Saviour was anxious to satisfy and comfort his people, by giving them the most early evidences of his glorious victory over death and the grave. One of the disciples to whom he made this early appearance was Cleopas, or Alpheus, said by the ancients to be the brother of Joseph, the supposed father of our Lord. There is nothing said in the New Testament to enable us to ascertain the name of the other. They were walking to Emmaus when our Saviour came to them. This village was about eight miles distant from Jerusalem; and was celebrated for its hot baths, which were said to have derived their virtue from Jesus having bathed his feet in them. Julian, the great apostate, was so enraged at this traditionary account, that, from enmity to Christ, he commanded the baths to be destroyed.

While the disciples walked to Emmaus, they were engaged in close and earnest conversation about the remarkable event which had taken place in Jerusalem, namely, the death of their Lord, and the amazing circumstances with which it was accompanied. This is a blessed example for the imitation of the people of God, in all ages, and in all countries Christ's

followers never can be so honourably, profitably, or pleasantly engaged, as when they are employed in conversing about the death and resurrection of Christ.

While they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and joined himself with them. They who seek Christ find him, and they who make him the subject of their affectionate conversation, will most assuredly be admitted to the sweet enjoyment of his fellowship. When Jesus appeared to the two disciples, their eyes were holden that they did not know him. This was wisely arranged by Providence, that they might be enabled with freedom to speak to the unknown Jesus respecting his death and supposed resurrection; and, on the other hand, that Jesus might give them that information respecting his death and resurrection which they so particularly required.

Jesus asked them of their communications. They said they conversed respecting Jesus of Nazareth, his condemnation, his death, their own opinion, that they once considered him the Messiah; and also the wonderful news they had heard, that he had risen from the dead. These were great and important subjects. Then Jesus spake to them, reproved them for their unbelief: he showed them the necessity of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glory which should follow. When they drew near to the village, he was persuaded to accompany them to their house; he sat at meat with them, and then they knew him. In a moment he vanished out of their sight, their unbelief fled, and they rejoiced in their risen Lord.



THE INFREDULITY OF THOMAS.

John XX ver 27



"Stretch forth thy hand" the Saviour cried,
And thrust it in my wounded side ;
This living witness now receive ,
And be not faithless but believe .

THE INCREDULITY OF THOMAS.

JOHN XX. 27. A. D. 33.

THERE are many plagues in the heart of the children of God; and one of the worst of these plagues is unbelief. It is impossible for a true Christian to be an unbeliever, but there is not a true Christian without unbelief. The Apostle Thomas was a good man, and a believing man; but still he had much unbelief in his heart. Though unbelief did not reign in him, yet unbelief greatly influenced him, greatly injured him, and greatly disgraced him. This blot has long remained upon his character; for to the present day, after the lapse of more than 1800 years, he is called *unbelieving Thomas*.

We may now consider for a little the account which the Evangelist John gives of the incredulity or unbelief of Thomas, and of the kind, pointed, and seasonable reproof which the blessed Jesus administered on account of his unbelief.

On the very day our Saviour rose from the dead, he appeared to his disciples. They were assembled together with shut doors, for fear of the Jews. Jesus stood in the midst of them, and saluted them with these pleasing words, worthy of his character as the Saviour of man—"Peace be unto you." To convince them it was really himself, he most condescendingly showed them his hands and his side. They saw in his hands the marks of the cruel nails, and in his bosom

the mark of the cruel spear. Again he blessed them, and breathed upon them the Holy Ghost, and placed before them the great functions of their apostolical office ; but Thomas was not with them when Jesus came. On his arrival, the disciples said to him, " We have seen the Lord." He would not believe them. It was a sin in Thomas to be absent from the disciples when they met together for purposes sacred and holy ; and it was a great additional sin in Thomas to *deny* they had seen the Lord, when they positively affirmed they had. Indeed, he went a step further, and said, he would not believe Christ was risen, unless he saw the print of the nails, unless he put his fingers into the print of the nails, and unless he actually thrust his hand into the Saviour's side.

Soon after, Thomas met with Jesus in the presence of the other disciples. When they were assembled with shut doors, Jesus stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, " Peace be unto you." Now follows Thomas's seasonable reproof. Our Saviour said to him, with affectionate meekness, and yet with impartial faithfulness, " Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side ; and be not faithless, but believing." Now the unbelief of Thomas fled, faith resumes its place, and holy shame filled his soul. " Thomas answered, and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

Holy Spirit, enable us to say with Peter, " Whom having not seen, we love."

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QUESTS APPEARING TO PETER.

John .Xvi. ver: 7.



His Lord when eager Peter found,

No time to thought he gave ;

JESUS APPEARING TO PETER.

JOHN XXI. 7. A.D. 33.

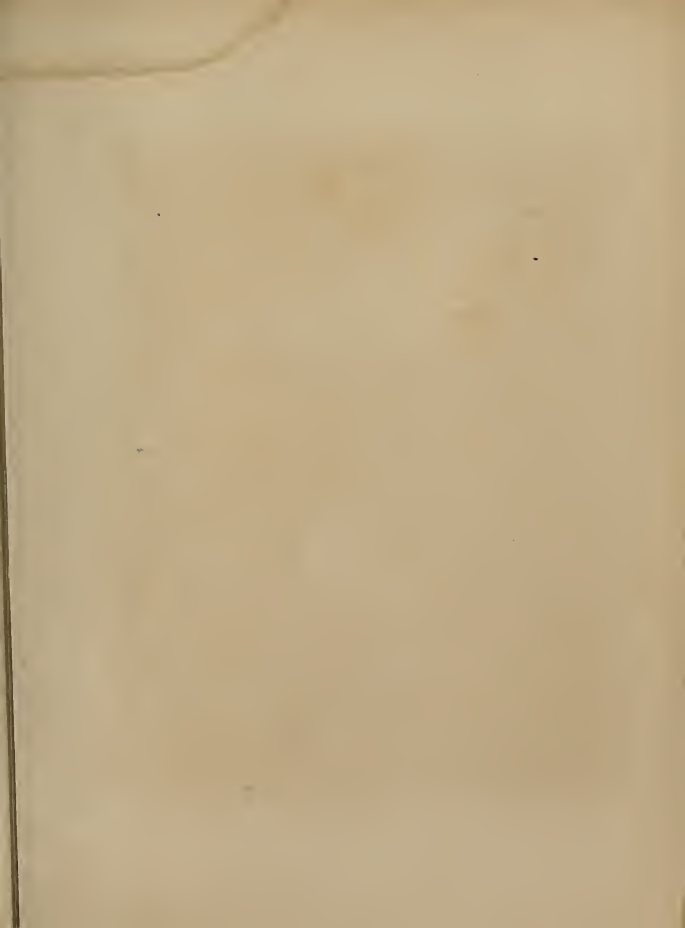
AMONG our Saviour's appearances to his disciples after his resurrection, very particular mention is made of his appearance to them and Peter at the sea of Tiberias. This sea was the sea of Galilee, on that part of Jordan which widened into a large lake, and which passed that portion of the Holy Land which was called Galilee. It was also called the sea of Tiberias, because Tiberias, a famous city built by Herod Agrippa, stood upon its shores. This appearance of our Lord differed from those which were before it. In the preceding, our Saviour showed himself to his disciples when they met in solemn assembly and for purposes expressly religious, when they were likely expecting him. But in this he showed himself to them on a week-day, when a-fishing, and engaged about their usual employment.

The number of the disciples are specified to whom our Saviour appeared. They were seven; namely, Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. Thus seven, a goodly number, of witnesses were present, who could give their united and powerful attestation to the truth of the resurrection of Jesus.

They were engaged in fishing when our Saviour showed himself. They were his disciples, and yet

must labour for their daily bread. The history of the church proves that laborious and useful ministers have not always been able to obtain support from the church of Christ. Even St. Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, was occasionally obliged to support himself by working at tent-making with his own hands.

The disciples were engaged in fishing nearly the whole night, but caught nothing. Thus the visit and appearance of our Lord were most seasonable. He came to them in their straits, and disappointment, and perplexity. He came to relieve them, and to help them. He proved to them, what he has always proved to his people, a very present help in time of trouble. While Jesus stood on the shore, he said to them, "Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, and did cast himself into the sea." Amazing was the quantity of fishes. They amounted to an hundred and fifty and three great fishes. When the disciples came to the shore, they had a delightful interview with their Lord, rejoicing in his bounty, and rejoicing in his fellowship.





Hark ! to the gazers Angels say,
Why do ye thus remain ?
As ye have seen him pass away,
So shall he come again !

ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

ACTS I. 10. A. D. 33.

THE ascension of our Lord to the heaven of heavens, is an event clearly foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures. In carefully reading the twenty-fourth Psalm, we must see that the following words are a glowing and splendid prediction of the ascension of our Lord. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." We meet with predictions of the ascension of Christ in Psalm lxxviii. 17, 18, equally striking, clear, and sublime. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

We will now consider the particulars of this most wonderful event—the ascension of the Son of God. On the very day of his ascension, Jesus met with the disciples. They addressed to him at that time the following question: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Even then they were unacquainted with the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, and imagined that Jesus would form a temporal king-

dom, and thus deliver them from the Romish yoke. Our Saviour in his answers referred them to the approaching day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost should come upon them, and make them witnesses of the truth to the remotest regions of the earth. When he spake these things to them, they had very likely reached the top of Mount Olivet. Our Saviour never gave them the slightest intimation while leading them to the summit of that hill, that he was then to be separated from them, and to ascend to heaven. Now, his glorious chariot is ready. Now, multitudes of angels are in readiness to accompany him in his triumphant flight to the throne of glory. He lifted up his hands, and blessed his disciples. "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. A cloud received him out of their sight."

"Lo ! his triumphant chariot waits,
And angels chaunt the solemn lay,
'Lift up your heads, ye heavenly gates!
Ye everlasting doors, give way !"

"Who is the King of glory, who ?
The Lord of boundless power possest :
The King of saints and angels too ;
God over all, for ever blest."

The disciples looked up steadfastly to heaven as he ascended. Two angels remained behind, and told them that Jesus should come again, as they had seen him go into heaven

DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Acts II. ver. 4.



With holy awe th'Apostles mark the sight
Of fire descending from the Lord of light ;
And feel, while there the cloven tongues they trace,



DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

ACTS II. 4. A.D. 33.

THE most remarkable effusion, or descent of the influences of the Holy Spirit, of which we have ever heard, or ever read, took place on a day called by the Jews the day of Pentecost. The feast of Pentecost was appointed in the Jewish church to render thanks to God for the quiet possession of Canaan, and for the mercies of the finished harvest ; also to commemorate the giving of the law from Sinai, and to prefigure the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles. It is very observable, that on the day of Pentecost, God gave the law from Sinai ; so, on that very day, the gospel-law began remarkably to come out of Zion.

Many centuries previous to this event, it was foretold by the prophet Joel, and his prophecy is very minutely quoted by the inspired Luke, in the second chapter of the Acts. Joel thus prophesied of this event, chap. ii. 28, 29 : “ And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions : and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.”

Our Saviour very frequently promised the disciples this remarkable descent of the Spirit, who should lead them into all truth, show them things to come, deliver them from their great ignorance and prejudice, and endow them with astonishing gifts, to qualify them for

the great office of the apostleship, to which they were called.

On the day of Pentecost, all the disciples met with one accord in one place. They were engaged in holy conversation, and in earnest supplication. They were waiting for the Spirit, they were praying for the Spirit. O how greatly their assembly was honoured, and how greatly their prayers were blessed! The heavens were rent above their heads, and the place where they assembled together was filled with the glory of God. The descent of the Spirit was accompanied with miraculous manifestations. A sound came from heaven, as of the rushing of a mighty wind. There also appeared sitting on the heads of the apostles, as it were, cloven tongues of fire. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. In one moment, they were endowed with the most astonishing miraculous gifts, and were thus qualified to preach the gospel in every language spoken upon the face of the earth!

“What gifts, what miracles He gave!
And pow’r to kill and pow’r to save!
Furnish’d their tongues with wondrous words,
Instead of shields, and spears, and swords.”

On that very day their spiritual conquests commenced. They addressed Parthians, Medes, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Lybia, Rome, Crete, and Arabia, in their own tongues, and there were added to the church that day about three thousand souls.



THE LAME MAN HEALED.

Acts III. ver. 7



When Peter rais'd him by the hand,
The lame Man firmly trod :
Then press'd through Crowds on either hand,
Leaping, and praising God !

THE LAME MAN HEALED.

ACTS III. 7. A.D. 33.

IMMEDIATELY after the day of Pentecost, the memorable day on which the Spirit was so wonderfully poured out, the apostles began to preach the gospel, to proclaim the resurrection of Christ, and to perform the most astonishing miracles. The first miracle recorded is one which was performed by Peter and John. There was something remarkable about each of these apostles. Peter was remarkable as having been the chief speaker among the other disciples, and as having preached that astonishing sermon on the day of Pentecost, under which so many thousands were converted to Christ. There was something remarkable about John. He was, by way of eminence, the beloved disciple, the favourite of our Lord, and who leaned his head upon the Saviour's bosom.

It was in the temple the miracle was performed. Peter and John went together to the temple, to the house of mercy, to proclaim the gospel of mercy, and by the direction of Providence, to perform a miracle of mercy.

The poor afflicted man is very particularly described, on whom the miracle was performed. He was a poor lame beggar. His calamities were multiplied. He was a cripple. Not by accident, but naturally—from his mother's womb. Therefore his case was the more

hopeless and desperate. It is not likely he ever expected to walk like other men. He was a beggar as well as a cripple. His parents were unable to provide for him, and he was unable to provide for himself; therefore he was carried day after day to the temple, and placed at the gate, which was called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple.

When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked an alms of them. Benignity and mercy shone in their countenances, and therefore he concluded that an application would not be made to them in vain. The expectations of the poor man were greatly raised when he saw Peter and John fastening their eyes upon him, not with the look of cold aversion, but with the look of tender sympathy. He then expected to receive something of them. However, in receiving an alms he was disappointed. But while he was disappointed in receiving a blessing which he expected, he was astonished and delighted by receiving a blessing which he expected not. "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Now, that promise is literally to be fulfilled, "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart." Peter lifted him up by the right hand, and immediately his ancle bones received strength. The astonishment and delight of the poor man were inconceivable. "And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God."



THE DEATH OF ANANIAS.

Acts V, ver. 5.



When lying Ananias heard
The sound of Peter's awful word ;
His Soul was seiz'd with sudden dread,
He trembled—gaz'd—and fell down dead.

THE DEATH OF ANANIAS.

ACTS V. 5. A.D. 33.

IMMEDIATELY after the down-pouring of the influences of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, great love prevailed among the followers of Christ. Those who were rich felt so much for those who were poor, that they literally sold their possessions, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made to every man according as he had need. Perhaps in no period of the history of the church of Christ was there ever so great, so magnanimous, so disinterested a display of christian love and benevolence as this!

Youthful readers, pray for a larger increase of christian love among the followers of Christ. There is nothing they need so much as this. There is nothing will adorn them so much as this. There is nothing, so much as this, will render them powerful, useful, and even glorious among the kingdoms of the world. When love reigns as it ought among the members of Christ's church, then, and not till then, will it appear "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

Though great numbers sold their possessions to be divided equally among the members of the christian community, we have only the names of three persons recorded in Scripture, who were connected with this

wonderful transaction. The name of the first is mentioned with honour and respect, but the names of the second and third with the most humiliating infamy and disgrace. The first was Joses, surnamed by the apostles Barnabas, which being interpreted, is, the son of consolation. He was a Levite, a proselyte from the Jews unto the christian church. Having land, he sold it, and laid the money at the apostles' feet.

The other two were Ananias, and Sapphira his wife. They were not converted persons, but only nominal professors; or, in still plainer language, they were hypocrites. Miserable, wretched state! Their minds were carried away by a sinful, carnal ambition. They wished a great name, and were more desirous that their own fame should be sounded and proclaimed, than that the poor and needy should be relieved. Therefore, to gain this end, they sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the price. There would have been no harm in this, if they had frankly told the apostles this was the case; but, when they laid down the money, they said it was *all* the money when it was only a *part*. This was the sin, the aggravated sin, which brought upon them an awful and sudden death. Peter told Ananias "that Satan had filled his heart, and that he had lied, not merely to man, but unto God. The moment these words fell upon his ear, he fell down dead." Sapphira came in a little while after. Peter addressed her in the same way, and she fell down dead!

O Lord, teach us truth in the inward parts!



THE STONING OF STEPHEN.

Acts VII. ver: 60.



See the fearless Martyr praying,
While the stones around him fly;
Calling on his God, and saying
Lord receive my Soul on high!

THE STONING OF STEPHEN.

ACTS VII. 60. A.D. 33.

STEPHEN, who was the first martyr of the christian church, was one of seven holy men, who were chosen to fill the office of deacon. One particular part of that office was, to watch over the poor widows and members of the church, and prudently to distribute among them the money which was collected for their temporal relief. Those seven deacons had to discharge still more important duties than this. They had to preach the everlasting gospel, and publicly and privately to employ all means within the reach of their power for extending the kingdom of Jesus, and for bringing men from the region and shadow of death into the life, liberty, and joy of the children of God.

Stephen was admirably qualified for all the duties of his important office: he was filled with the Holy Ghost. "O King and Head of thy church, cause, most mercifully, that all thy ministers, of every name and denomination, may be filled with the Holy Ghost!" Beside, Stephen was filled with love to souls, and his mind was richly stored with divine knowledge, and a very full and accurate acquaintance with the history of the church of God, from the earliest days, to the very time he was called to seal his testimony with his life.

It is affecting to think, for how very short a period of time this eminent saint was continued in his sacred

office, and how soon his blessed labours were closed by a violent death. His sun had just risen, and then it was called to set. His public career only lasted a few days. He had just unfurled the banners of salvation; he had just proclaimed the resurrection, and ascension, and triumph of his Lord, when, as first martyr, he was called to heaven, to sit down with Christ upon his mediatorial throne, and to cast his martyr's crown at the Saviour's feet.

He was full of faith and power, and did wonders and miracles among the people. This stirred up against him the enmity of the Jews, with the scribes, and the rulers. He was accused of blasphemy. He was made a prisoner. They brought him before the council, over which the high-priest presided; the very man before whom Jesus appeared a few weeks before. In answer to the high-priest, Stephen made a noble and unanswerable defence against the sin of blasphemy with which he was accused. This eloquent defence contained an outline of the church of God from the days of Abraham to the death of Christ. He charged them solemnly with the guilt of having murdered the Son of God, the Just One.

“He looked up to heaven, and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” Then the Jews, with enraged violence, drew him out of the city, and stoned him, laying their clothes at the feet of Saul. Stephen said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” and, praying for his murderers, fell asleep.

PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH.

Acts VIII. ver. 36.



The grace of Heav'n is not confin'd
To time or place, to rank or kind ;
This, Ethiopia's Eunuch found,



PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH.

ACTS VIII. 36. A. D. 34.

PHILIP was one of the seven deacons, chosen at the same time with Stephen. Immediately after the funeral of Stephen, he went to Samaria, and preached the word with great power. He performed many miracles upon the bodies of afflicted sufferers ; and still greater miracles of mercy upon the minds of some wretched demoniacs, by casting out unclean spirits out of many who were possessed of them.

After preaching with amazing success in Samaria, he was called to be instrumental in a very remarkable conversion, namely, the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch. So important was this event, that an angel is sent on purpose from heaven to give Philip directions as to his conduct in bringing about this wonderful event. The angel told Philip to proceed to the south of Jerusalem, to a desert place in the neighbourhood of Gaza, a city which originally belonged to the Philistines. Philip obeyed ; and as he went, he met a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, and having the charge of all her treasure, and who had been at Jerusalem to worship. It is evident, this man was one of the Gentiles who was a proselyte to the Jewish faith and worship. Like multitudes of others, he was engaged in paying his annual visit to Jerusalem at the time of the

Passover, when it was expected all who were able should be present to unite in the joyful services of that feast. This noble personage was returning from Jerusalem, and sitting reading in his chariot a portion of the Prophet Isaiah, when the Spirit said unto Philip, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." Philip ran, and drew near, and listened, and heard him read from the prophet Isaiah. This was indeed an interesting sight—a man of noble rank sitting in his chariot, and reading the Scriptures. Blessed, blessed will be our land, when our nobles make the Bible the man of their counsel. "O Lord, hasten it in thy time!"

Philip inquired of this nobleman, whether he understood what he read. By no means offended with the freedom of Philip, which would have filled the mind of many other men with indignation, he very humbly and meekly replied, "How can I, except some one should guide me?" By divine impulse, he knew that Philip was that instructor. He invited him to come up and sit with him. What is very remarkable, he had been reading from the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, which gives a prophetic account of the sufferings, death, resurrection, and triumph of Christ. Besides, he had just left Jerusalem, where Jesus had been lately put to death. Doubtless he must have heard of the astonishing event. Philip showed him clearly that the prophet spake of Jesus, and none else. The eunuch was led by the Holy Spirit to believe the word. He became a genuine convert, was baptized, and went on his way rejoicing.

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL.

Acts LX, ver. 4.



What wonders doth God's mercy shew !
Its power to change no skill can paint ;
A light , a voice, from heav'n — and lo !
The Sinner is become a Saint !

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL.

ACTS IX. 4. A.D. 35.

NOTHING is impossible with God! A Saul converted! A Saul, at whose feet were laid the garments of those who stoned Stephen to death;—a Saul, who dragged men and women to prison, because they believed in Jesus;—a Saul, who breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of our Lord;—a Saul, who readily sought, and obtained a commission to proceed to Damascus, and cruelly persecute those Jews who became converts to the christian faith;—a Saul, who actually went to the very walls of Damascus in prosecuting his bloody purpose;—was he converted by Divine grace? Nothing is impossible with God! There is no heart too hard for Divine grace to soften. There is no heart too diseased for Divine grace to heal. There is no heart too vile for Divine grace to sanctify and adorn. There is no heart too obstinate for Divine grace to subdue. If ever there was one rebellious sinner more hopeless than another, Saul was that rebellious sinner. But nothing is impossible with God. Nevertheless, Saul obtained mercy! Though once the chief of sinners, he became the chief of saints. Though once the chief of persecutors, he became the chief of preachers. Though once the chief of blasphemers, he became the very chiefest of the apostles of our Lord.

The particulars of the conversion of Paul are truly singular and affecting. He applied personally to the high-priest, to give him a commission to go to Damascus, the capital city of ancient Syria, and if he found any followers of Jesus, to be empowered to bring them bound to Jerusalem. But, O, what mercy awaited this furious persecutor in Damascus! It was there he was destined by Heaven's decree to be set at liberty from Satan's service, and to become a free-born son of the living God. The cruel high-priest readily agreed to the request of Saul, gave him his commission, and provided for him suitable attendants to assist him in his violent persecuting pursuits. He leaves Jerusalem fully equipped, and his bosom panting for the blood of the saints, like a ravening and devouring wolf. At last, he drew near the walls of Damascus; and the nearer he drew, the more earnestly he longed to gratify his malicious eyes, by looking upon the helpless victims of his vengeance.

When he came near to Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. He fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Amazed, he inquired who addressed him. Still more astonished, the Lord told him it was Jesus, whom he persecuted. He trembled greatly. Jesus addressed him with words of love and mercy. Divine grace entered his soul; he became a new creature, and an heir of immortality.

SAUL RECOVERING HIS SIGHT.

Acts LX, ver. 17, 18.



He who, in th' Oppressor's day,
Took his mortal sight away;
Sets before the Sufferers view,
Earthly light, and heavenly too!

SAUL RECOVERING HIS SIGHT.

ACTS IX. 17, 18. A.D. 35.

AT the time of the conversion of Paul, a twofold change took place upon him. One respected his mind, and the other his body. The eyes of his mind were opened, and the eyes of his body were struck with blindness. The men who accompanied Paul saw the glorious light from heaven, and yet none of them were struck blind. Paul saw a glory which they saw not, namely, the glory of Christ; and he saw besides, what they saw not, namely, Christ himself. Some think it was this manifestation of the person of Christ, so dazzling and bright, which was too great for his bodily eyes to endure. And probably, Christ took from him, for a season, his bodily sight, to withdraw his attention from worldly things, that he might be the better qualified for meditating, with adoring solemnity, thankfulness, and love, on the discovery which Jesus gave of his person and glory.

He remained in this state three days, and during that time he did neither eat nor drink. Whether these three days of blindness and of fasting were a period of great suffering or enjoyment, we cannot tell. Likely, it was a time of great sorrow and grief. No doubt he reflected, with penitential bitterness, on his violent opposition to the cause of Christ's kingdom and gospel. No doubt he shed floods of tears, when he thought of

the cruelties he inflicted on the unoffending and helpless sheep of Christ's flock.

The manner in which his sight was restored, is wonderful and striking. There was a twofold vision. Paul saw, in a vision, a man named Ananias coming to him, and putting his hand on him that he might receive his sight. Ananias, a disciple at Damascus, saw the Lord in a vision. He was desired to go to a street called Straight, and to inquire at the house of Judas for Saul of Tarsus. Ananias was told, for his encouragement, that *Saul prayed*, and that he was informed, in a vision, that Ananias should visit him, and put his hands upon him, when Saul's blindness should depart. Ananias was well acquainted with Paul's previous character, and expressed alarm at the prospect of visiting him. God mercifully and immediately dispelled his fears, by convincing him that Paul was a converted man, and that he was destined to be a most distinguished preacher of the gospel he once opposed.

Ananias, thus encouraged, went at once to the house of Judas. There he found Paul, blind, and waiting for his arrival. Ananias, putting his hands upon him, and addressing him in the most affectionate manner, said, "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."



THE ANGEL APPEARING TO CORNELIUS.
Acts X. ver. 4.



THE ANGEL APPEARING TO CORNELIUS.

ACTS X. 4. A.D. 41.

CORNELIUS lived in Cesarea, a city situated near the Mediterranean Sea, upon its eastern shores. He was a military officer, in the service of the imperial Roman government. He had the command of a company consisting of a hundred men : hence he is called a centurion of the band, called the Italian band. He was by birth a Gentile, a devout holy man, and probably a proselyte of the gate to the Jewish religion.

True piety is lovely in any profession, but in a soldier it shines with peculiar lustre. Let us earnestly pray that vital godliness may increase in our army and navy, and that our soldiers and sailors may become the loyal and faithful servants of the King of kings.

While Cornelius was employed in prayer and fasting, an angel of God came to him, to give him the pleasing intelligence, amounting to this, that the gospel was now to be preached unto the Gentiles, and that the first gentile congregation should meet under his roof, and be addressed by Peter, one of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The angel addressed him with great kindness, and told him that God had heard his prayers, and accepted his alms. The angel instructed him to send to Joppa, a neighbouring sea-port town, for one Simon Peter, who was lodging at the time with one Simon a tanner ; and that Peter would give him all suitable direction in his future religious concerns. Cornelius obeyed the

angel; called three of his servants; told them the vision; and sent them to Joppa, to bring Peter.

A vision also appeared to Peter, by which he was prepared for the invitation of Cornelius. The vision was peculiarly striking. A sheet descended from heaven, containing beasts of various kinds, considered by the Jewish law unclean. These mingled beasts intimated that God had chosen for himself a people from among the Gentiles. He was told that he must not scruple to preach to these Gentiles, or to admit them as members of the christian church. It was a hard matter, even for converted Jews, to believe that the Gentiles should ever be admitted into the church of Christ. So great was their prejudice, and so great their ignorance of Old Testament predictions respecting the calling of the Gentiles to the faith and the kingdom of Christ.

Peter, by this vision, was delivered from all his prejudices on the subject, and went forthwith to the house of Cornelius, in company with the messengers of that devout and excellent centurion. On his arrival, he found a congregation assembled to receive him. The first regular gentile congregation now met in the house of a pious military gentile officer, and was waiting with great expectation to hear what God the Lord would say unto them by the mouth of his servant Peter. He preached to them Jesus, and salvation through his blood. His sermon was attended with divine power. The Holy Ghost fell upon the people, and they were converted and baptized.

PETER J

Tr

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PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON.

Acts xlv. ver. 16.



told them the
Peter.

which he was
The vision
and from
ordered
its

Peter, by the Angel freed
In his hour of greatest need;
To his wondering friends appears

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON.

ACTS XII. 16. A.D. 44.

THE imprisonment of Peter by the command of Herod, and his release from prison by an angel from heaven, form a most interesting part of sacred history. Herod was one of the early persecutors of the christian church. The very name of *Herod* is execrable. It was a Herod who sought the life of the child Jesus, a few days after he was born. It was another Herod, at whose cruel and unjust tribunal Christ appeared immediately before his death. It was probably the same Herod who killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. And now he forms the design of treating Peter as he had treated James.

This early persecutor of the Christians found the Jews were mightily pleased, because he had put James to death. He loved the good graces of the Jews, and to afford them satisfaction, he was willing to shed more blood, and to take away more lives. By his command Peter is apprehended, and committed to the keeping of four quaternions of soldiers, that is, sixteen;—a very goodly company indeed, for the purpose of keeping in custody one quiet, helpless, unoffending man! While Peter was in prison, prayer was made for him without ceasing, by the church. Prayer was earnest, persevering, and believing. These prayers entered the ear of a prayer-hearing God. These prayers were

graciously answered, to the great joy of the praying Christians, and to the great confusion of their blood-thirsty, persecuting foes. God greatly honours prayer. Thousands of volumes could not contain the instances in which God has honoured prayer, or the blessings which God has bestowed in answer to prayer.

On the very night Herod had resolved to bring forth Peter, and put him to death, to gratify the wishes of the malevolent Jews, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, and bound with two chains. As if the prisoner was not sufficiently secure, in addition to these, there were keepers before the doors, keeping the prison. O how soon it was found that all these guards, and soldiers, and keepers, were insufficient to secure the prisoner !

An angel of the Lord is sent from heaven, to set the prisoner free. He came to Peter, and a great light shone in the prison, lighter than the brightness of day. So composed was the mind of Peter, that he was fast asleep. O how blessed are they, to whom God gives peace ! The angel touched Peter on the side, raised him, and said to him, Arise quickly. Immediately, his chains fell off from his hands. At the desire of the angel, he girt himself, put on his sandals, cast his garment around him, and followed the heavenly messenger. He followed him through one ward of the prison to another, until they came to the great iron gate, leading into the city. It appeared to open of its own accord. Thus Peter was set free, and his useful life most mercifully preserved !

ELYMAS STRUCK BLIND.

ACTS XIII. 6. A.D. 44.

FOR some time, Paul and Barnabas travelled together through many countries, performing miracles of mercy, and preaching the glorious gospel of Christ. After carrying forward their sacred missionary objects for a season, in Selucia, and the neighbourhood, they embarked at that sea-port town in Syria, for the island of Cyprus, which is situated quite in the eastern portion of the Mediterranean Sea. It abounded with cypress-trees, from which circumstance it derived its name. The inhabitants of this island were infamous for the most licentious immoralities.

Barnabas was born in this island. It was very natural for this good man to wish that his native island should have the benefit of his early labours, and as soon as possible after, he entered upon the work of the holy ministry. When Paul and Barnabas reached Salamis, one of the cities of Cyprus, they entered into the various synagogues of the Jews, and preached the gospel. Continuing their missionary labours, they proceeded onward to Paphos, another city in the island. The fame of their preaching and their miracles reached the ears of Sergius Paulus, the deputy of the country. He was a very prudent man, and therefore well qualified to fill and adorn the lofty office he held in that island. Divine providence impressed his mind with a great

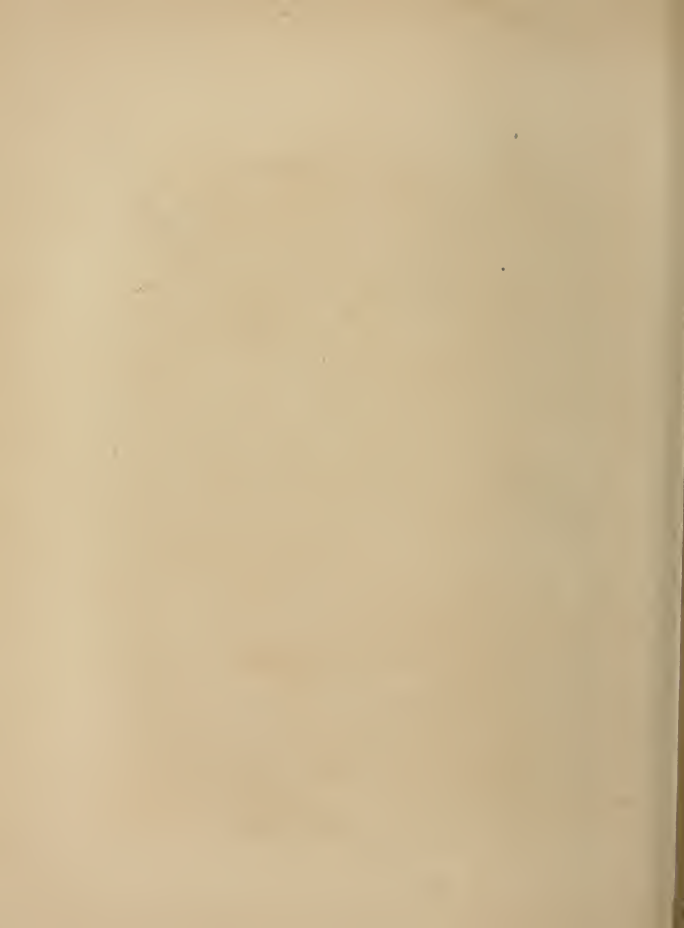
desire to hear the word of God from the lips of Paul and Barnabas. In this highly commendable wish, the deputy met with the most determined opposition on the part of Elymas, who was a Jew, a sorcerer, and a false prophet. As a Jew, he was determined in his opposition to the christian faith; as a sorcerer and a false prophet, he was violent in his resistance to that gospel, which laid the axe of truth to the very root of his sorcery and falsehood. While Paul and Barnabas were engaged in pouring divine truth into the ear, and on the heart of the deputy, Elymas most daringly and presumptuously withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith, by representing the doctrines they taught as impositions, and themselves as impostors. He attempted to blind the eyes of the deputy from seeing the truth, and therefore God, by an act of alarming justice, struck him blind.

Paul fixed his eyes upon him, and said, "O full of all subtlety and mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist, and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand." This judgment produced a blessed effect upon the mind of the deputy, for he believed, and was astonished at the doctrine of the Lord

O Lord, give us faith, and make us astonished at thy doctrine! Amen.



Sirs, these things ye must not do ;
We are mortal Men like you :
And we strive that all may learn
To the living God to turn !



PAUL AND BARNABAS AT LYSTRA.

ACTS XIV. 13. A.D. 46.

GREAT success attended the preaching of Paul and Barnabas, wherever they went. The word spoken by them had free course, and was glorified. This great success was followed by great opposition. The more the word prevailed, so much the more the persecuting Jews strove to prevent its growing prosperity. The Jews were not contented themselves by persecuting the apostles, but they uniformly stirred up the heathen Gentiles to join them in their attempts to destroy the christian faith.

Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium, the capital of Lycaonia, in Lesser Asia, and entered into the synagogue of the Jews, and preached. The conversions were wonderful. Great multitudes, both of Jews and Greeks, believed. This was followed by an attempt, both by Jews and Gentiles, to put them to death. It was therefore necessary they should depart. They fled to Derbe and Lystra, two other cities in the same province of Lycaonia. Immediately they commenced preaching. There was no time to be lost. Souls were perishing in multitudes; therefore these holy men wished to be the honoured instruments of turning them from the error of their ways, and of plucking them as brands out of the burning.

While Paul was preaching at Lystra, a poor lame man, who had been a cripple from his birth, was

among the number of those who listened to the truth. His heart was impressed. He fixed his eyes intensely and affectionately upon Paul. The apostle saw that he had faith to be healed. Instantly he addressed him, and said, with a loud voice, "Stand upright upon thy feet." These words were uttered in the presence of a great multitude, who knew the lame man, and who had seen him for years in his poverty and suffering. Every eye was directed toward him. O what was their amazement, when they saw the man, who had *never* walked before, instantly starting up from the ground, as vigorous and active as any in the midst of the great assembly of spectators! "He leaped and walked." The people were so astonished, that they exclaimed, "The gods are come down to us, in the likeness of men." They were ignorant heathen, and therefore spoke according to the views they had of the false gods they ignorantly worshipped. They looked upon Paul and Barnabas as two deities. They considered that Barnabas was Jupiter, the chief of the gods; and they believed Paul was Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Under the influence of this extraordinary and sudden excitement, they sent for the priest of Jupiter; they brought oxen and garlands unto the gates of the city, for the purpose of offering sacrifice. Paul and Barnabas were greatly shocked and grieved. They rent their garments, and ran in among the people; they proclaimed God as the only Jehovah, and at last succeeded in restraining them.



Christian Men can never die
Till their Master, from on high,
Knowing all their work is o'er,
Bids them to his presence soar!



PAUL STONED.

ACTS XIV. 20. A. D. 46.

PAUL was placed in exceedingly different circumstances in the city of Lystra. At one time the idolatrous inhabitants looked upon him as a god, and wished to worship him; and only a very little while after, the same people were persuaded by the Jews of Antioch and Iconium, and stoned him, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.

The Jews were very persevering in their persecutions. As soon as they received information of the success of Paul's labours, they began to stir up all classes of the people, both magistrates and others, to unite together, to put him to death. In Lesser Asia, where Paul experienced the enmity and persecution of the Jews as much as in any part of the world, the persecution did not begin till a great and effectual good was done. He was blessed in doing what his bitter Jewish enemies could not undo. He planted, as an instrument in the hand of the Spirit, a gospel tree, which his enemies could not pluck up by the roots. He kindled a sacred gospel fire, which his enemies could not extinguish. We find, also, that these persecutors defeated themselves. They literally promoted the very object they wished to destroy. It is true they compelled Paul and Barnabas to flee from place to place. This, in reality, increased the usefulness of these eminent men. By visiting so many different towns and cities, they planted

so many more churches, and thus more rapidly enlarged the kingdom of Christ.

When the Jews of Antioch and Iconium heard of the miracle performed in Lystra on the lame man, and of the multitudes who received the christian faith, they came onward to Lystra. They mingled with the heathenish inhabitants, whose heart the gospel had not yet touched; they stirred them up; they persuaded them that Paul was an enemy of all religion,—that he was a troubler of the peace,—that he was turning the world upside down, and therefore not worthy to be allowed to live. It is very probable they added money and bribes to their lying and malicious entreaties. They soon raised a tumult. They soon formed a strong and violent party against Paul,—a party which would be satisfied with nothing less than the death of the apostle.

This servant of Christ was likely engaged in proclaiming the everlasting gospel, when the band of conspirators fell upon him, and stoned him. They considered that they had so completely accomplished their wish, that he was really dead. He showed all the outward symptoms of departed life. His face was covered with blood. His breathing ceased. He was stretched upon the ground, mutilated and motionless. These barbarous monsters dragged him out of the city, and left him in an open place, to be eaten of dogs. But as the disciples stood around him, he was miraculously restored, he arose, and came into the city.

THE PYTHONESS.

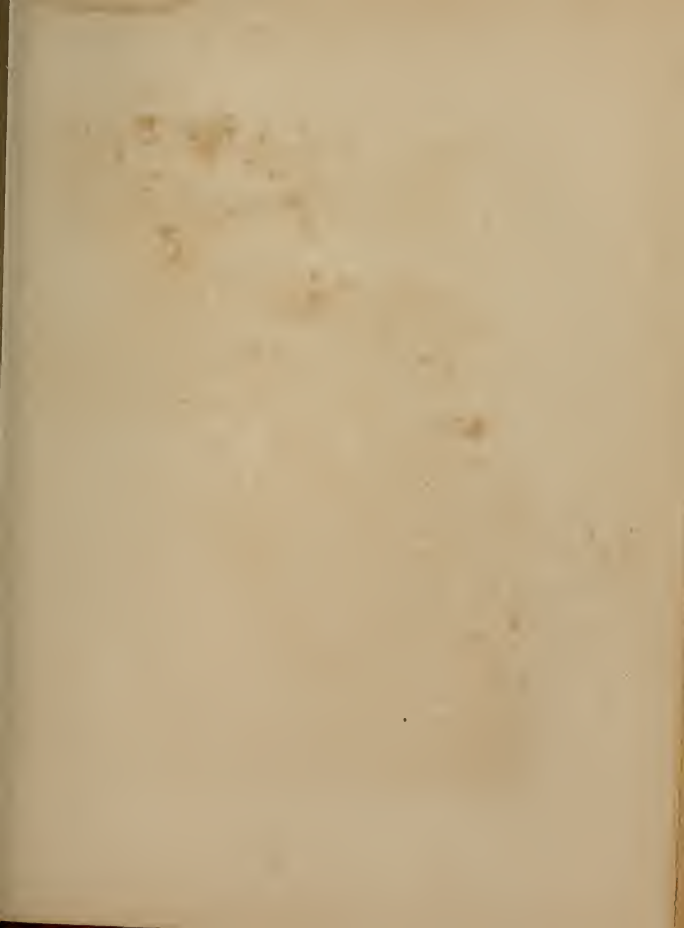
ACTS XVI. 18. A. D. 53.

PHILIPPI, a chief city of Macedonia, was visited by the apostle Paul. Some very remarkable circumstances took place in this city, in close connexion with his labours and history. Though his continuance was short, most important events occurred, under the management of a sovereign and gracious Providence. The apostle went out on the Sabbath to the side of a river, where prayer was wont to be made; and he sat down and preached to some pious women, who resorted to that retired and favoured spot, for prayer. Lydia, a seller of purple, was among the number who listened to the word of life. It proved to her the word of life, and salvation. She, and all her household, were converted to the faith, and were baptized.

One of the hearers of St. Paul at Philippi, was a young woman, who was possessed of a spirit of divination, and who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. It would appear that she was actually possessed of a devil. This evil spirit showed his presence and his power, by stirring up this young woman to impose upon the public by pretending to foretel future events, and to reveal the very secrets of Jehovah. Though this damsel was under the power of Satan, she was employed by God himself to give her testimony to the truth, that Paul and his fellow-labourers were the servants of the Most High God,

who showed the way of salvation. As Paul and the other disciples went openly, and at the usual time, to the place where prayer was accustomed to be made, this young Pythoness followed them, crying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation." She was directed to give them the highest character—"the servants of the Most High God." And she was directed to declare that they were engaged in the most honourable and merciful employment, namely, "showing men the way of salvation." Oh, is it possible that any employment can equal that of the sacred ministry, in importance or humanity? Its object is to prevail with those who must otherwise perish, to accept of that salvation on which their eternal happiness depends.

Paul felt great compassion for this Pythoness. "He turned, and said to the spirit, I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her. And he came out the same hour." This was a blessing, not only to the damsel, but to the country where she lived, and where she had done so great mischief by her sorceries and deceptions. In addition to this, we have every reason to believe that this damsel was made a subject of divine and saving grace, and became as diligent in her converted state, in pulling down the kingdom of Satan, as in her unconverted state she had been diligent in building it up. Miserable is the situation of those who are held fast by Satan's chains; but blessed are they who are delivered from his yoke!





Midst your Altars, one ye raise
To the unknown God, i view;
Whom ye ignorantly praise,
Him declare I unto you !

PAUL PREACHING AT ATHENS.

ACTS XVII. 22. A. D. 53.

PAUL's preaching to the people and philosophers of Athens, was a very remarkable event in the life of that most eminent and useful servant of the Most High God. Athens was the most celebrated of the cities of ancient Greece, and built in a plain of singular beauty. It was founded at least 1000 years before the birth of our Lord. Its inhabitants were famous for learning, wealth, conquests, and the fine arts. It could boast of the noblest edifices, and of the most magnificent temples. It also produced the most famous philosophers, orators, and generals. Socrates was among its philosophers, Demosthenes among its orators, and Miltiades among its generals.

Though the Athenians made the greatest pretences to learning, they were given to the most vain curiosity, and were debased by the grossest idolatry. Hesiod says that their Grecian gods amounted to thirty thousand. Besides, they erected altars to the unknown gods. Here Paul preached the gospel, and disputed powerfully with the philosophers.

Mars' Hill was the spot Paul selected for proclaiming divine truth in the hearing of those who, though famed for human learning, were in a state of midnight darkness as to the knowledge of the one only, the living and true God. An Athenian court of great eminence, called the Areopagus, was usually held in this place. It was in

the hearing of the members of this celebrated assembly, Paul exposed the absurdities of idolatry, and declared the glorious truth of Jehovah, as the only Lord God, so wonderfully and fully made known in the gospel of his Son.

The particulars of this celebrated sermon were much calculated to arrest the attention, and impress the minds of those learned men who composed the assembly. At once he blamed them for their superstition. He immediately points out the root of all the evil with which they were justly blamed, as learned idolaters. There is no subject so important as that of the Deity—to know *that* God is, and to know *what* God is. That they stood in the greatest need of this knowledge, he proved by the fact, that he saw in their city an altar with this inscription, “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.” He told them that he was able to give them information on this sublime and most useful subject. Whom they ignorantly worshipped, he declared; and in a few sentences, shining brighter than the glory of the firmament, pointed out the truth of the being, the attributes, and works of the Most High God. In a few words, he gave them more knowledge than was contained in the ten thousand volumes of their most learned and distinguished sages. He told them, also, how God was to be worshipped, and that he had given a revelation of himself and his will, and that he had appointed a day in the which he would judge the world; at the same time calling on all men to repent.

PAUL AT EPHESUS.

Acts XIX, ver 19.



When God's own truth with zeal to scan,
The mind is oft employ'd,
The erring works of sinful Man,
Will soon be all destroy'd.

PAUL AT EPHESUS.

ACTS XIX. 19. A.D. 54.

EPHESUS was, in ancient days, one of the most famous cities of Lesser Asia. It is said to have been built by Ephesus, an Amazon lady; and is thought to have been as ancient as the days of David. It was situated upon the river Cayster, about twenty-three miles north of Miletus, and sixty-three west of Laodicea. Among the heathen, it was chiefly famed for a magnificent temple of Diana. It is said to have been 425 feet in length, 220 in breadth; its roof, being 70 feet high, was supported by 127 pillars of great beauty. It was more than 200 years in finishing. Seven times it was set on fire. At one time, Ephesus was wholly destroyed by an earthquake. In the year 19 it was rebuilt. Now it is only a ruinous village, consisting of forty or fifty houses, and an old castle.

Originally, the inhabitants of this city were noted for sorcery, divination, astrology, and idolatry. Diana was the false deity they held in greatest admiration.

When Paul first visited Ephesus, he only continued a few days. Some months after, he returned, remained three years, and preached with great success. Here some Jewish impostors pretended to have the power of casting out devils, and called upon them in the name of Jesus, whom Paul served, to leave those

persons in whom they dwelt. In one instance, an evil spirit, acting by means of the body in which it dwelt, said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" The man possessed of the devil leaped upon them, and wounded them.

Paul's preaching, in connexion with this alarming event, was blessed in greatly impressing the minds of many of the Ephesians. Great numbers of those who dealt in sorcery, and who used curious and unlawful arts, brought their books and publicly burnt them. The price amounted to fifty thousand pieces of silver, and which, in our money, was equal to 6250*l*. Oh splendid and blessed effect of a preached gospel! "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." The word grew in the remarkable effects which it produced, by adding to the number of the members of the church of Christ. Glorious sight, to see the word of truth prevail over error!—to see the word and worship of God prevail over the corrupted and idolatrous worship of false gods!

Very soon after, Demetrius, a silversmith, raised a great mob against Paul and his associates. He made silver shrines for Diana, which brought no small gain to the craftsmen. Paul was mercifully preserved. He left Ephesus at that time, and Timothy remained behind to settle the affairs of the church. About twelve years after, when Paul was prisoner at Rome, he wrote the Christians here a most sublime and useful epistle.

PAUL RESCUED.

Acts XXI, ver. 32



All instruments are in the hand
Of Christ his People's King ;
And, at his word, the Warrior band
To Paul their succours bring.



PAUL RESCUED.

ACTS XXI. 32, &c. A. D. 60.

THE inspired writer in the book of the Acts gives an account of a very providential rescue of the apostle Paul, when he was in danger of being torn to pieces by an infuriated mob in Jerusalem, which longed for his destruction. The Jews in that city had heard of the amazing success which had attended his ministry in Lesser Asia, in Greece, and in other parts of the earth; they were therefore resolved, when he came to Jerusalem, to deprive him of his life.

After a very considerable absence, Paul returned to Jerusalem; but he returned to lose his liberty. He returned to be taken from tribunal to tribunal. He returned to be conducted a prisoner to Rome, where he wrote several epistles to various churches—epistles which will prove an invaluable legacy to the church of Christ, till the close of ages. His life was placed in the greatest danger, but Providence interposed. His life was preserved, yet his liberty was lost. The dangers and deliverance of Paul are subjects of great importance, and furnish reflections much calculated to promote our improvement.

Consider his danger. Paul went into the temple regularly every day, for seven days, according to the law of Moses, in consequence of a vow which he had made. Whether he was right or wrong in thus conforming to the law of Moses, is a point I cannot deter-

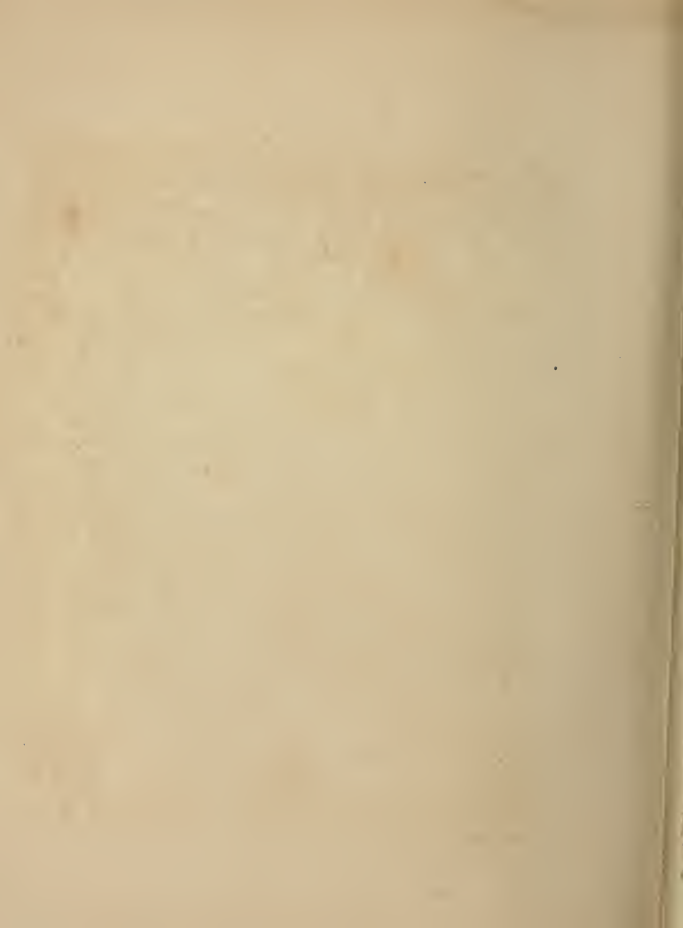
mine ; yet one thing I know, it placed him in the greatest peril, and actually issued in the collection of an immense concourse of people, who almost succeeded in depriving him of life.

Paul, in his missionary travels, had met with immense opposition from the Jews of Lesser Asia. The treatment he received at Lystra, is a proof of this fact. While Paul was in the temple, nearly at the close of seven days, some of those who knew and persecuted him when he was in Lesser Asia, recognised him. They immediately stirred up all the people and laid hands upon him, and cried, "Men of Israel, help!" They charge him with teaching corrupted doctrines against the laws of Moses ; and they charge him with ill practices, as well as with corrupt doctrines, namely, with bringing Greeks into the temple, and thus polluting the holy place. Nothing was so calculated as this to raise a tumult among the Jews. In a short time, the whole city was moved. The people rushed into the temple in great numbers. Having dragged him out of the temple, like a polluted criminal, tidings came to the chief captain that the infuriated populace were going about to kill Paul, and that the whole city was in an uproar. Without delay, he went down with centurions and soldiers. As soon as the captain and military appeared, the people left beating of Paul. "Then the chief captain came near him, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains." Thus Paul was preserved from those who more resembled lions than men.

PART, BEFORE FELIX.
Acts. XVII, ver. 25



When Paul his theme the Judgment made
And by it Felix sought to win ;
His Hearer trembled—but delay'd
Repentance—and so died in sin !



PAUL BEFORE FELIX.

ACTS XXIV. 25. A.D. 60.

AFTER Paul was made a prisoner in Jerusalem, he was sent by Lysias with a strong military guard to Cesarea, to the care of Felix, the Roman governor at that place. Within five days after, Ananias the high priest, and others, followed him to carry on a legal prosecution against him before Felix. Tertullus, a flaming orator, was employed to oppose Paul in the court. As the apostle successfully repelled all his charges, the further consideration of his case was delayed a few days, until the arrival of Lysias, the chief captain, from Jerusalem. In the interval, Paul received much courtesy and kindness from Felix, who allowed him to receive the visits of his friends.

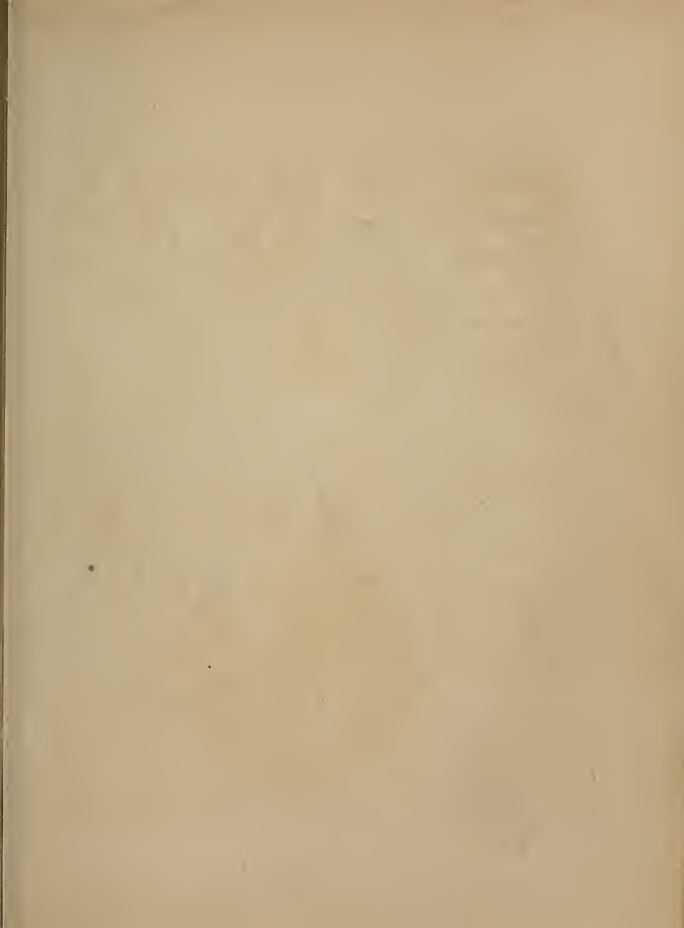
Some days after, Felix, and his wife Drusilla, sent for Paul. They wished to hear him declare to them in private those doctrines he generally taught, and which had excited so much feeling and noise in many parts of the Roman empire. These doctrines were directly at variance with the practices of Felix and Drusilla. However, Paul was faithful to his God, to his conscience, and to his hearers. "When Felix came, with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee."

Here we have a remarkable preacher, a remarkable auditory, a remarkable sermon, and a remarkable effect produced. The preacher was the apostle; one of the greatest, the best, and the most useful of men that ever lived, or adorned the christian church. The preacher, too, was a prisoner, through the malice of the rulers of the Jewish church, who not only attempted to ruin his good name, by casting upon him the vilest reproaches, but laid plans to deprive him of his life. This was the preacher.

The congregation was remarkable. It consisted of Felix, and his wife Drusilla. He was Roman deputy in the government of Judea. He married in adultery, for he enticed Drusilla, the wife of Azizus, king of Emesa, to divorce her husband, and marry himself. Drusilla was a Jewess, and the daughter of Herod Agrippa, who was eaten up of worms. Being educated in the Jewish religion, she felt a great curiosity to hear Paul speak, whom the leaders of the Jewish religion so violently opposed.

The sermon was striking. The preacher reasoned of righteousness and temperance, to convince Felix of his unrighteousness and intemperance, of which he was so guilty. He spoke of the certainty of a judgment to come; thus showing, that though he might escape punishment from men, there was a tribunal to come, from the sentence of which there could be no escape.

Great was the impression produced on Felix. He was much agitated. He trembled! Conscience awoke; but, alas, there was no conversion!



THE SHIPWRECK OF ST. PAUL.
Acts XXVII. ver. 44.



When full of souls Paul's vessel lay,
Wreck'd on a foreign strand;
Each was preserv'd in God's own way,
And all were saved at last.

THE SHIPWRECK OF ST. PAUL.

ACTS XXVII. 44. A.D. 62.

WHEN Paul appeared before Festus, he refused to return to Jerusalem to be tried by the Jews; and claiming his right as a Roman citizen, he appealed unto Cæsar. Accordingly he was put on board a ship of Adramyttium, and, with other prisoners, committed to the charge of Julius, a centurion of Augustus's band. On the day after their voyage commenced, they touched at the ancient city of Sidon. There Paul was very courteously permitted to land by Julius, and refresh himself, and see his friends. Having left Sidon, they sailed under the island where Paul's labours had been so eminently blessed. When they reached Myra, a city of Lycia, the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy, into which all the prisoners were introduced. For many days they sailed slowly, and passed Cnidus, Crete, and Salmone. A tempestuous wind arose, when they were near Crete, which, in defiance of all the efforts of the mariners, drove them close upon the rocks of the island of Clauda. By the kindness of Providence they were preserved. For fourteen days they were tossed up and down the Adriatic sea, which lies betwixt Italy and Greece. During all that time, they saw neither sun, moon, nor stars. Paul being informed by God, assured them that all their lives should be preserved, and only the ship would be

lost. The mariners, by their sounding-line, found the water was not deep, and therefore concluded they were drawing near land. They let down the boat for the purpose of escaping themselves, and leaving all the rest who were in the ship to perish. Paul prevailed upon the centurion to prevent their intention, as essentially necessary for the preservation of the lives of the passengers. The soldiers cut off the boat, and allowed her to be driven away by the sea. Paul was now the comforter of the afflicted passengers. The most of them had been holding a fast for fourteen days. During this time, they had only taken a small portion of bread and water for their support. Paul encouraged them to take food, and persuaded them that they should not perish in the waves, but be cast on some island, which they should reach in safety.

Observing land, the mariners wished to conduct the vessel into a creek. Now the shipwreck was complete, for she struck aground upon a neck of land, and was broken to pieces.

The soldiers, seeing that the prisoners would have an opportunity of escaping, proposed that they should be all put to death. Julius, animated with a better spirit, and from respect to Paul, prevented the execution of a purpose so cruel, barbarous, and bloody. The number in the ship amounted to two hundred and seventy-six. Some by swimming, and others on planks and broken boards, got safe to land, on the island of Malta.



PAUL AND THE VIPER.

Acts XXVIII. ver. 4.



When Paul the Viper seiz'd—alarm'd,
To death they deem'd him given ;
But, when he shook it off unharm'd,
They thought he came from Heaven !

PAUL AND THE VIPER.

ACTS XXVIII. 4. A.D. 62.

WE read of no individual connected with the church of Christ, in such a variety of circumstances and places as the apostle Paul. One justly observes, "He was a planet, and not a fixed star. We find him in the island of Melita, to which, in all probability, he would never have come, unless he had been thrown upon it by a storm. Yet it seems God has work for him to do here: even *stormy winds* fulfil God's counsel. This ill wind blew good to the island of Melita, for it gave them Paul's company for three months, who*was a blessing wherever he went."

MELITA, or MALTA, is a small island of the Mediterranean sea, about 54 miles south of Sicily, and 150 north of Africa. The word *Melet* signifies a place of refuge, and accordingly Melita was employed as a place of refuge to the ancient Tyrians, in their voyages to Carthage and Spain.

Paul and his companions were, as we have said, driven upon this isle by a shipwreck. They were most kindly received by the natives, who it is probable were descended from the ancient Tyrians.

When Paul and the other passengers arrived at the island, both cold and rain prevailed. They were all drenched with wet. A fire was most desirable, and a fire was kindled by the inhabitants. Paul, with others, went to gather sticks: when he had gathered a bundle,

he laid it on the fire. A viper at that moment came out of the fire and fastened on his hand. It had remained concealed and asleep among the dry rubbish of sticks which Paul gathered and cast into the fire. When it felt the heat, it instantly flew at Paul, and fastened upon his hand. In this there was a divine interposition; we may add, there was a divine direction. This will appear when we consider the very wonderful effects which this circumstance produced upon the minds of the inhabitants of the island.

The viper was well known to the people of Malta: they knew it to be one whose sting was mortal. When they saw the viper cleaving fast to his hand, they concluded he was a murderer. They thought that though he escaped the dangers of shipwreck, the justice of God was determined to follow him close, and not allow him to escape his merited doom. Therefore they expected every moment to see him fall down dead. Paul shook the viper into the fire. May God enable my youthful readers to cast off the viper of temptation; if you allow it to keep its hold, it will sting you, and wound you, and destroy you.

The islanders continued looking on Paul, thinking that he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly; "but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god." This was followed by a miracle performed on the aged father of Publius the chief man of the island; and also miracles performed on many others at the point of death.

FAITH.
Rom. III. ver. 31.



Faith has an eye no tears can dim,
A heart no griefs can stir;
She bears the cross, and looks to Him,
Who bore it first for her!



FAITH.

ROM. III. 31. A.D. 60.

FAITH properly signifies a persuasive assent to any truth on proper authority. Things may be explained by their opposites. Doubting is the very opposite of faith.

Divines commonly mention four kinds of faith, which respect the truths of revelation. There is *historical* faith: this is an assent to the Bible as a true and infallible record. There is a *temporary* faith, by which divine truth may be received with some affection; but soon after, the impression is removed, as if it had never existed. There is the faith of *miracles*, by which a man believed a miracle would be performed upon him, either by Christ or his apostles.

The fourth is *saving faith*, or the grace of faith: this faith is a grace wrought in the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. He takes the things of Christ, that is, divine truth and the blessings of salvation; he shows them to the soul, and thus persuades and enables us to receive and rest upon Christ for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel. In the Assembly's Shorter Catechism we have the following admirable description of saving faith:—"Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel."

It is by faith we believe ourselves altogether sinful, lost, and undone, without Jesus Christ. This, our true state as sinners, we believe upon the testimony of the law. The law is in this case our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ. By faith we believe that Jesus is infinitely suited to our case, that he is able to save us; we believe that he is really offered to us in the gospel; we believe that on the warrant of this offer we *may* receive Christ; and to crown the whole, by faith we actually receive Christ as our Saviour and surety. When the soul actually receives Christ, and actually rests on Christ, then that act is performed by which the salvation of the soul is completed; in other words, *then the soul is saved*. All this is done upon the testimony of the gospel. As we believe we are lost upon the testimony of the law, we believe we are saved upon the testimony of the gospel. O how delightful when this is the case! The soul is placed in a situation of the highest honour, having God for its Father, and angels for its kindred. It is placed in a situation of the greatest blessedness, as it tastes the sweets of divine love here, and as it becomes an assured heir of the ceaseless pleasures of heaven hereafter. And it is placed in a situation of the greatest security and defence. It dwells in the secret place of the Most High, and abides under the shadow of Him who is the Almighty. Young friends, seek this faith! O seek it as silver, and search for it as for hidden treasures!

CHARITY.

2 Cor. IX. ver. 7.



Mortals if ye would display,
Charity sincere and true,
While his due to Man ye pay,
Keep your love to God in view.



CHARITY.

2 COR. IX. 7. A. D. 60.

THE expression of the inspired apostle is a striking and admirable description of practical charity, or the exercise of christian love, in contributing, by money and otherwise, to the relief of the temporal necessities of poor and afflicted saints. The expression is in the form of a counsel. "Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Christian love is a holy principle or affection wrought in the heart by the Divine Spirit. Those who possess it, esteem, desire, and delight in God and Christ as their chief good, as the sum of all perfection, and as the fountain of all blessings. They take the greatest pleasure in obeying his laws, because their obedience springs from a principle of love, without which no obedience can ever be acceptable to God. They who possess this love, feel an affection to all who bear a resemblance to Christ's image, to whatever nation they may belong, or with whatever denomination of Christians they may be associated. It is not a contracted, bigoted, sectarian love. It is love to *all* who love Christ; it is love to *all* who bear his image. Holy Spirit, inspire us with this divine, this exalted affection. Where this love dwells, there is a disposition to do good to all men, and even to our very

enemies. What a treasure must such a grace be! The man whose heart is warmed with this grace can say, "We love him because he first loved us." And this command have we from him, "That he who loveth God, love his brother also."

O what stress the inspired apostle lays upon the necessity of this grace. If we have the most splendid gifts, and if we perform the most splendid deeds, and be destitute of this grace, all will amount to nothing. Without it, the tongues of men and angels are only sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal. If a man have the gift of prophecy, possess the most extensive information, and even have the power of performing miracles, and be without this, he is nothing. Even if he gives all his earthly property to feed the poor, and be destitute of the grace of saving love, it will profit him nothing.

We are by nature without love to God, or even any proper love to our neighbour. Sin extinguished the holy fire of love in the bosom of man. Let us pray that the Holy Ghost may kindle in our souls a flame of divine love; then we shall taste joys we never tasted before; then shall we perform acts of benevolence and kindness we never performed before. If we have this grace, it will make us patient under trouble, slow to anger, ready to forgive injuries, willing even to straiten ourselves, to relieve the wants of suffering saints, and it will teach us to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep. Such a grace will render our life a heaven upon earth.

PAUL REPROVING PETER.

Gal. II. ver. 11, 21.



When Peter stood aloof through fear,
And shunn'd the Gentile race;
Paul, with a spirit all sincere,
Reprov'd him to his face.



PAUL REPROVING PETER.

GAL. II. 11—21. A.D. 58.

GALATIA was an extensive province in Lesser Asia. Historians inform us, that it was originally inhabited by colonies which came from Gaul, the ancient name of France; and hence that province received the name of Galatia. The Epistle to the Galatians was not addressed to any particular church in that province, but to them all. It is probable that Paul was the honoured instrument in the first conversion of the Galatians to the christian faith. He was also successful in watering, and refreshing, and enlarging these churches. While he laboured among them, their love to him was most fervent. He thus reminded them of their ardent affection, "For I bear you record, that if it had been possible ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me."

When Paul left them, Satan, the enemy of souls and the troubler of churches, began, by means of Judaizing teachers, to do great mischief among the Galatian Christians. These teachers endeavoured to convince the Galatians that they could not be saved unless they connected the observance of the laws of Moses with faith in Christ. They were, alas, too successful in spreading among them this shocking heresy, which amounted to the withdrawing of their faith from the righteousness of Christ as the only procuring cause of a sinner's justification before God.

The Holy Spirit directed Paul to address this epistle to the Galatian churches, to bring them back to the purity of the christian faith, and particularly to bring them back to the christian and blessed doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ *alone*. To convince the Galatians of their sinfulness and folly, in returning to the beggarly elements of the Levitical law, now at an end by the sacrifice of Christ, he gives them an account of an interview with the apostle Peter, and of the reproof he gave to him, for refusing to eat with some Gentile Christians. This reproof was given to Peter at Antioch. In this city was the chief of the Gentile churches, as in Jerusalem was the chief of those churches which turned from Judaism to the faith of Christ.

Peter's fault was this: when he came among the Gentile churches he did eat with them, though they were not circumcised, according to the directions given him in Acts x. But when some Jewish Christians came from Jerusalem, he became shy of the Gentiles, wholly for the purpose of pleasing the Christians of the circumcision. He literally withdrew and separated himself. His example produced a bad effect upon others, for other Jews dissembled with him; and even Barnabas was carried away also with their dissimulation. O how grievous, how shameful! Thus Paul reproved Peter: "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

Lord, deliver us from our infirmities, and teach us to long for the perfection of heaven! Amen.

H O P E.
Heb. VI. ver. 19.



Standing on the Rock of faith,
Trusting what the Saviour saith;
Looking on the things above,
Hope is fill'd with joy and love.



HOPE.

HEB. vi. 19. A.D. 64.

THE graces of the Spirit may be compared to a chain of the purest and the richest gold. Never did ornaments around the necks of queens, or diadems on the heads of kings, appear so comely and glorious as the graces of the Spirit, which are both the inheritance and ornament of the saints of God. Christ, in the beginning of his sermon on the mount, mentions the following :—humility, repentance, meekness, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, compassion, and peacefulness. The apostle, in his letter to the Galatians, furnishes a rich clustre of the graces; namely—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. The same holy apostle, in his letter to the Corinthians, makes a selection of three of the most eminent graces, holding them up to the admiration of the saints : — “ Now abideth faith, hope, charity, but the greatest of these is charity.”

All graces have their peculiar excellences, loveliness, and usefulness. This strikingly appears in the grace of HOPE, which the same apostle illustrates under the metaphor of an anchor, in his admirable epistle addressed to the Hebrew Christians. Observe his own words : “ That by two immutable things, (namely, God’s promise and oath,) we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us ; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth into

that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

Hope is that most blessed grace, by which we live in the assured expectation of those blessings which God has graciously promised. The apostle compares it to an anchor. He does so for this plain reason: what an anchor is to a ship, the grace of hope is to the soul. The world may be considered as the sea, over which the soul, as a ship, is passing to the heavenly Canaan. On this sea the ship of the soul is often tossed up and down, and tried by many storms. The ship of the soul contains a very valuable cargo, consisting of graces, comforts, and hopes. Heaven is the blessed harbour to which it is bound. Temptations, persecutions, and afflictions, are the raging waves, and the furious storms to which the vessel is exposed, and which threaten its shipwreck.

We have need of an anchor to keep us safe and steadfast. That anchor is gospel-hope. It is *sure* in its own nature, as it is the workmanship of God. It is *steadfast*, for it lays hold on Jesus. It is not like other anchors, for it is thrown or cast *upwards*. It enters within the veil, and thence lays hold of Christ, the rock, the sure rock, the rock of ages. Jesus is the anchor-hold of the believer's hope. What a blessed, and what a safe voyage may we expect with such an anchor! So provided, the ship of the soul never can suffer shipwreck, will defy every storm, and at last triumphantly enter the haven of eternal rest.

VIEW OF PATMOS.

REV. I. 9. A. D. 96.

THE isle of Patmos is celebrated as having been the place where St. John, the beloved disciple, was for a season in a state of solitary confinement. Patmos is said to be an island of the *Ægean* sea, one of those called *Cyclades*, and about thirty-five miles in circumference.

John was the brother of James, and by way of eminence, the “Disciple whom Jesus loved.” At meat he generally sat next his Lord, and leaned upon the bosom of Jesus. O may it be our privilege to enjoy intimate fellowship with Christ on earth; and in another and a better world, for ever and ever, to behold his face in righteousness! John was one of the three highly-favoured worthies whom Jesus took to be the witnesses of his retirements, and more especially of his transfiguration and agony. Historians tell us that John lived longest of all the apostles, and that he was the only one who died a natural death, while all the rest passed from death to life in the fiery chariot of martyrdom.

It is generally believed that he laboured long as the honoured and beloved pastor of the church of Ephesus, where it is supposed he wrote the blessed Gospel which bears his name. It is said he did this at the request of the ministers of the several churches of Asia, for the purpose of confuting the heresy of Cerinthus and the Ebionites, who held and asserted that our Lord was no more than a *mere man*.

Some have said that, by the cruel command of one of the Roman emperors, he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, but being miraculously preserved, was brought out unhurt.

The book of the REVELATION was written by John in the isle of Patmos, whither he was banished by the edict of some heathen and Roman ruler. It was for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, he was banished into that distant and solitary island. His people must have been exceedingly afflicted when they saw their beloved and aged pastor, nearly one hundred years of age, made a prisoner, put on board a ship, and taken out of their sight, to be landed on a dreary island, where it was believed he must very soon become the victim of death. Equally intense must have been the grief of that blessed and loving pastor, when he was torn from his church and flock, never likely to see them more on earth. Little were they aware, and little did John know, that the isle of Patmos, instead of being a prison to him should be a little heaven here below. If in that island he was separated from the ministers of Christ, there he saw Christ himself more glorious than the brightness of the sky. If he was separated from the members of the church of Christ on earth, there he conversed with angels, and there he saw in vision a multitude which no man could number before the throne of God and the Lamb. If he could not hear the songs of saints in the earthly sanctuary, he heard the songs of heavenly worshippers with the sweet sounds of their golden harps.



THE VISION OF THE WILTS IN CORSE.
Rev. W. W. 2.



See the King who rides in might,
On his Steed of dazzling white;

THE VISION OF THE WHITE HORSE.

REV. vi. 2. A.D. 96.

THE book of the Revelation is a book of great mystery, difficulty, and sublimity. It contains numerous prophecies connected with the church of Christ and her enemies. These are in the course of fulfilment. Many remain to be accomplished. The events of Providence will explain these predictions as they are fulfilled. And there is no doubt a period *will come* in the history of Christ's church, when the book of the Revelation will be as clearly understood as any portion of the sacred volume. Holy Spirit, hasten that time!

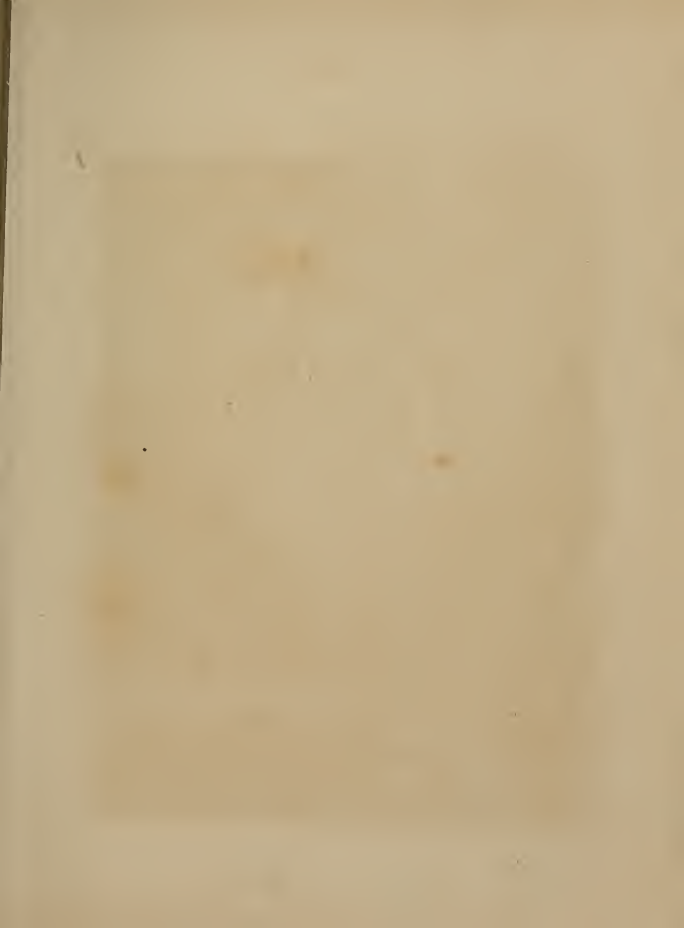
The prophecies of this book are divided into seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials. The seals are opened, the trumpets are sounded, and the vials are poured out. There is nothing stationary. All is animation and activity.

Let us carefully observe, too, that all is under the wise management and mighty control of Christ as Mediator, and as King of Zion. The book of the divine counsels, we learn from the fifth chapter, is committed into his wise and powerful hands, and he enters at once upon the awfully solemn work of opening the seals, and publishing their contents.

In the sixth chapter we have an account of the opening of six seals. The first seal is now to engage our attention. The Lamb, namely Christ, *opens* the

first seal; that is, he makes known and accomplishes the purposes of God towards the church and the world. One of the heavenly messengers, with a voice loud as thunder, calls on the apostle to draw near, and observe the opening of the seal. The apostle gives the following account of what he saw. "And I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer."

Some apply this vision of the conqueror on the white horse to the Roman Emperor Trajan, who, in the year 108, not only conquered Armenia, Assyria, and Mesopotamia, but carried the bounds of the Roman empire to a greater extent than it had ever before reached. But it is far more likely that this vision applies to Christ, and the amazing triumphs of Christianity, in the first ages, over heathenism and idolatry, throughout the vast extent of the Roman empire, and even beyond its limits, in other parts of the earth. May not the *white horse* be considered as an emblem of the gospel, which is pure and spotless, on which the Saviour rides among the nations with great swiftness? May not the *bow* be considered as an emblem of that convincing power which Christ exercises by means of his word and ministers? Convictions are sharp arrows sent from Christ's *bow*, which is strong, and will always abide in strength. The crown given him intimates the willing submission of men to his authority. He has begun his victories, and will continue them till all nations are prostrate at his feet.



THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES.

Rev. XV ver. 6



Amidst the Judgments Lord, which thou wilt send,
To shake the Earth, before its coming end;
Thy Saints in Heaven, astonish'd at the view,
Shall strike their harps and sing "Thy ways are just and true"!

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES.

REV. XV. 6. A. D. 96.

JUDICIOUS divines consider that the state of the church under the Pagan powers is represented under the six seals which were opened. They consider that the state of the church under the Papal power is represented by the vision of the six trumpets, which began to sound upon the opening of the seventh seal. They also consider that the vision of the *seven vials* points out the steps by which the destruction of Anti-christ should be accomplished.

John was greatly impressed with the vision of the seven last vials and the seven last plagues. He calls the sign *great* and *marvellous* ! Seven angels appeared before him, invested with the awful commission of pouring out these last vials, and of inflicting these last plagues. An immense number of spectators are represented as the witnesses of this solemn display of God's vengeance against the enemies of the church. These spectators had themselves gained the victory over the *beast*, who is about to be destroyed. John saw them standing upon a sea of glass, that is, a pavement of great extent, resembling a sea reflecting the glory of the Lord. The apostle saw them with golden harps in their hands, and heard them pour from their lips the sweetest notes of joyful praise to the honour of the King, the Defender, and the Deliverer of Zion.

Then he saw, that the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. As soon as the

temple was opened he obtained a sight of the seven angels who were invested with the awful commission of desolation and death! They were clothed in pure and white linen, having their breasts girded with golden girdles. These garments resembled the garments of the priests, who officiated before God in the temple of old. This intimated that these angels were not only under God's direction, but in connexion with the interests and prosperity of his church.

The apostle beheld in their hands materials of destruction, even the artillery of divine vengeance, prepared for the destruction of that power which had raised itself in opposition to Christ's authority and kingdom. This is described as *seven vials filled with the wrath of God!* One drop of God's wrath, how dreadful! But who can conceive the fulness of God's wrath, seven vials *filled* with the wrath of God?

The destruction of every description of antichrist, whether in the Papal church, or in other churches, will be a great and a glorious event. O what shouts of praise will be raised in the heaven of heavens, when this mighty Babylon shall fall to rise no more!

It seems clearly foretold that the fall of antichrist will be preceded and accompanied by the most formidable and alarming judgments. Assuredly these vials of judgments will be poured out on those nations where antichristian superstition and idolatry most extensively prevails. And this dark night will be followed by a blessed day of MILLENNIAL GLORY.



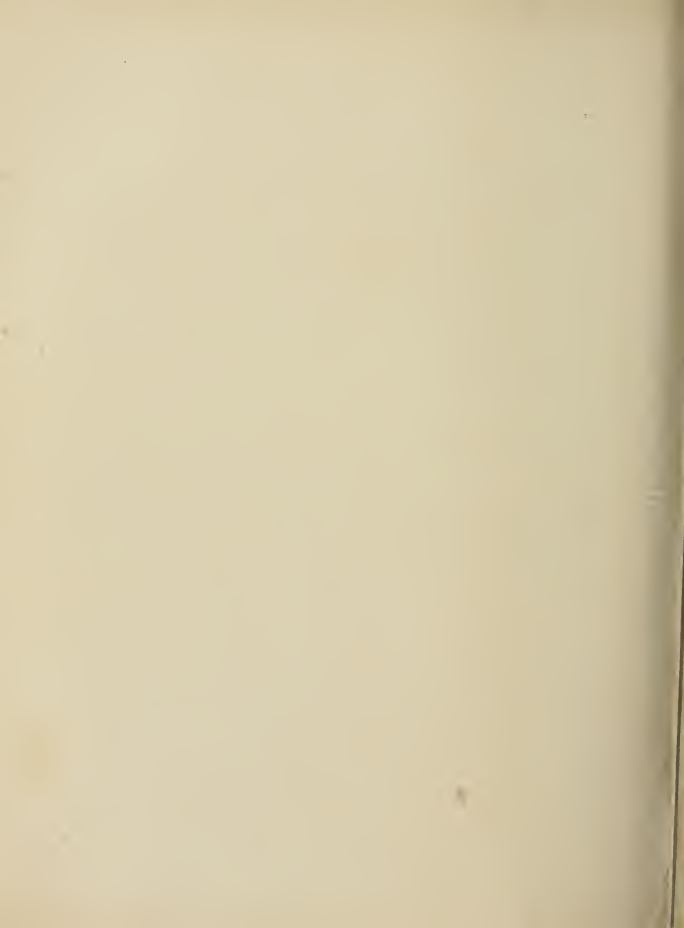
Spirit, depart ! th' Apostle said,
I charge thee by Christ's power ;
The evil one with fear obey'd
And fled that very hour !



VIEW OF PLATONOS,
Rev. I. ver. 9.



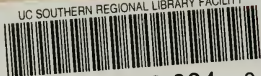
Behold the place where signs no mortal sees,
In modern days, to favor'd John were shewn;
Where God was with him, though his enemies
Had banish'd him that he might be alone.







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